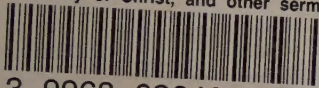


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THE FINALITY OF CHRIST

REV. W. E. ORCHARD, D.D.

THE FINALITY OF CHRIST

And Other Sermons

BY

REV. W. E. ORCHARD, D.D.

MINISTER OF THE KING'S WEIGH HOUSE, LONDON

Author of "The Safest Mind Cure," etc.

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THE FINALITY OF CHRIST. II

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THE FINALITY OF CHRIST

THE FINALITY OF CHRIST

I

THE ECONOMICS OF THE INCARNATION

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich."—2 COR. viii. 9.

There is a tremendous theology involved in this simple statement which we cannot evade. It does not say that Jesus was poor, but that He became poor: it was a piece of voluntary renunciation. But when was Jesus rich, and when did He become poor? There is no possibility of referring this act of renunciation to His earthly life; it can only refer to the act of the Incarnation by which He surrendered His heavenly glory and His Divine majesty, and adopted not only human life, but a life of poverty. Here we have the doctrine of the pre-existence of Jesus indubitably implied, a pre-existence which for the moment St. Paul is content to define as one of richness. And what a light it throws upon St. Paul's use of the word grace. It stresses its condescension, its voluntary and spontaneous choice, the artistic beauty with which the ac-

of renunciation was made. We need all the fulness which the word holds in New Testament usage to bring out what it here contains.

But this passing reference to the doctrine of the Incarnation is very welcome, because it helps to rebut certain careless charges which have been brought against the Apostle. In the light of this text who can say that the doctrine of the pre-existence of Jesus as a heavenly being was an idea of St. Paul's invention, which he gradually worked out, forced upon the Church, and so corrupted the simple Gospel of Jesus, which made no such claims? St. Paul does not argue with his readers that this must be the truth about Jesus Christ: he says, *You know* the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is appealing to things that are commonly believed among them; and all the weight of his appeal would be lost if this was a new doctrine, which was here sprung upon them for the first time, or if it was an open question among the Church members at Philippi, just a theological opinion which might or might not be believed. Whenever this idea of the Incarnation was incorporated into the Christian faith, it was before this Epistle was written, and it had already become generally accepted, and was so surely believed that it could be appealed to in order to extract from people a generous contribution. It has to be very certain doctrine on which you can go to people to get money from them.

Then, again, it has often been charged against St. Paul that he had so little interest in the earthly life and teaching of our Lord; he is so obsessed with the doctrinal, ecclesiastical, and sacramental aspects of

Christianity. This is argued on the assumption that his letters give his complete scheme of preaching; whereas they are often letters called forth by some personal or practical issue; a great deal that they do not say is not said because it can safely be assumed. We should never have known that St. Paul had high sacramental notions if the Lord's Supper had been reverently observed at Corinth. But not only when St. Paul comes to the ethical part with which nearly all his epistles close does he echo again and again the teaching of Jesus Christ, if not verbally, yet as one soaked in its meaning and spirit; very frequently, as here, we get a reference which not only depends upon knowledge of the life of Jesus, but implies an accurate and detailed knowledge of the conditions of that life. St. Paul knows that it was a life of poverty; Jesus was poor. And in the expansion of this text which we get in the great passage in Philippians, he tells us what we do not otherwise know; that Jesus took the position of a bond-slave. Whether that means something of economic slavery or not we do not know; but it is the Master's own description of how he regarded His position among men.

Then St. Paul is sometimes blamed for his unconcern for social conditions. He certainly approaches them from a distance, with considerable detachment, and never by way of command. This was how he dealt with slavery. He would not make it a matter of rule; he did not exhort slaves to run away from their masters; but when one had, he wrote that wonderful little letter to Philemon which so skilfully pleaded that it would be an act of beautiful Christian

grace for him to release Onesimus. It is not the method we believe in. We go to war to set men free; we tell the slaves that it is their own fault if they are content to remain slaves. But are we perfectly certain that our way is best? Are our emancipated negroes really free? Will violent revolution bring men the liberty they seek? And here St. Paul is asking for a collection, which is a form of charity, a species of redistribution. He will not make it a matter of command. It all seems very harmless. But look at the principle to which he appeals. Not only does he appeal to the tremendous renunciation of Jesus Christ, who gave up all and reduced Himself to poverty, but he uses a word which I am afraid will cause some of us to fear. What is the standard he wishes to reach by his voluntary method? It is one of equality. Twice does he say, "I speak by way of equality." He does not expect them to impoverish themselves in order to enrich their suffering brethren; he merely wants to bring about an adjustment until there is neither abundance, or lack, but all stand on a basis of equality. Here are obviously far-reaching applications to be considered.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF OUR LORD'S POVERTY?

1. The fact of Christ's poverty can hardly be overlooked.

It is not only clearly indicated in the Gospels, but there is something determinative about it; it is not accidental. It might be argued that it was so, if Jesus had been born simply of the will of His parents. But

that we know is not the Gospel account; with that before us we cannot argue that the circumstances of Christ's birth were accidental; and that not merely in the way in which we might perhaps argue that ultimately no birth is accidental. This would have to be maintained as a matter of faith or philosophy about birth in general; but we do not need to rest there in the case of our Lord. His Mother was chosen by the Holy Ghost. About that choice to bear the Saviour of the world we are compelled to believe that it was selective and determined by Mary's entirely, and perhaps solitary, suitability for that tremendous mission. Theology has emphasized the conditions of nature and character which that must have demanded. Without disputing these, we can draw attention to other conditions, and we can assume that these were also necessary. Although of royal descent, she must have been poor, and married, not only to a peasant craftsman, but to one who could not secure that accommodation in an inn which money can generally purchase, even when it is reputed to be full. It is often pointed out that the poverty was not absolute, nor was it anything like that cruel and humiliating destitution which our modern system has produced, where, if a man is once by his carelessness or another's cruelty pushed outside the industrial machine, he must literally starve to death. In Palestinian society there were opportunities to get work; and even if a man would not work, he could always make a fair living at begging, as at that time there was no Charity Organization Society to teach that mendicancy is a crime as much on the part of those who encourage it as with those who

practise it. The family at Nazareth was neither destitute nor dependent, though it was a household where garments were patched until they could stand it no longer. The Apostles were men who, as with fishermen generally, owned their own boats. But they could all be denominated as poor.

And our Lord's teaching is explicit, and uncomfortably so. It is quite possible to make out that He could not have demanded the renunciation of all personal possessions as a duty for all who believed on Him, though He evidently did for His immediate followers. It can be pleaded that He never condemned riches as such, since He accepted the hospitality of the rich, and was friendly with them; nor did He teach that the possession of private property was a sin; but the most careful reading of the Gospels reveals that Jesus regarded riches as a tremendous danger to the soul, and as an almost insuperable obstacle to entering the Kingdom of God. It has been pointed out that in the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus the rich man goes to hell for no other crime than that he was rich, since the beggar at his gate was regularly fed from his broken food: he went to hell, although he practised charity. On the other hand, our Lord's teaching recognizes that there is a poverty which is the enemy of religion, which leaves one always thinking about where the next meal is coming from, or how one is going to get clothes to keep out rain and cold; and His message of the Kingdom definitely states that when the Kingdom is put first, when the sovereignty of God over the whole of human life is recognized, then all necessities will be added to men. And it is a suffi-

cient and even beautiful necessity that will then be guaranteed. There will be clothing as beautiful as the flowers which adorn the field; there will be food enough to keep one strong and happy; there will be houses in which one can retire into one's own chamber and shut the door and pray.

The Church is often blamed because it has neglected all this side of Christ's teaching. There has been a tremendous discussion about apostolic succession, and it has been held to be absolutely necessary to the continuance of the Church and the validity of its sacramental acts; but there has been little concern that the successors of the Apostles should live the same sort of life. The attempts of the poor to secure their just wages, and even the right to work for a living, have been regarded by the Church in general as preposterous and impossible; and the schemes which have been suggested for finding a more certain and equal economic basis have been denounced as subversive, and even atheistic. Yet right in the heart of the most rigid conception of the Church, where Socialism, as involving the condemnation of private property as sin, is denounced as a heresy, we have had the growth of the monastic system and the ascetic idea, which says as plainly as possible that if you want to follow Christ perfectly, among other things, you must renounce all possessions, and live on charity, or in a communistic order. Poverty is one of the evangelical precepts, and is held up as the perfect way. It is a mediæval survival; it has been continued in many strange forms, and with curious evasions; but there it remains, and its testimony cannot be mistaken.

2. Is St. Paul's application of merely religious significance?

What is actually meant by poverty and riches here? Are both poverty and riches economic, or both spiritual, or the poverty economic and the riches spiritual? These are not academic and mistaken questions. The text sounds very beautiful if you read it merely devotionally; but the moment you try to understand the meaning of its terms you must ask these questions, and you must answer them. The simplest solution is that which has preferred to ignore the economic interpretation, and to take both the poverty and riches in a theological sense, the one referring to the human condition, and the other to the divine; when the text would simply mean that Jesus became man in order that He might lift us all to God; accepted for the time the poverty of the human condition in order that the glorious riches of the eternal world might be open to us all. But it would be difficult for St. Paul to pass so easily as he then does to what is without doubt an economic application of his text. He argues from it that those who are rich ought to help their poorer brethren. Therefore we seem bound to infer that the interpretation must be economic. But does it then mean that Jesus endured poverty, as He endured the penalty of sin, in order that He might set us free from it and enable us to be rich? Is there not sanction here for what is often alleged to be the aspiration of all classes to-day, that every one should be rich, with houses and food and clothing in abundance and of the best? Was our Lord's condemnation of riches only of *comparative* riches, of the riches which

entails poverty? Would He have objected if every one was rich? It is difficult to read the Gospels and believe that it was the mere comparison, the mere existence side by side of riches and poverty; it looks as if Jesus believed riches to be a danger to the soul.

If we can accept neither of these interpretations, then it is only left open to us to take poverty in one sense and riches in another: that economic poverty is to be accepted in order to gain spiritual riches. This is a very unsatisfactory explanation to suggest. Indeed, the whole treatment of the subject will probably only move some to impatience. If the Gospel is as ambiguous as all this, of what guidance can it be for to-day? But we must be patient even if we are only going to prove that the Gospel will not yield a consistent message. It is possible that we cannot read it clearly for the complications that we have introduced into the subject; that the difficulties are in our own double-mindedness. And we must remember, too, that our Lord's way of teaching was obviously intended to compel us to search for the truth. Therefore we must not dismiss the different interpretation of these terms "rich" and "poor" as impossible because it is complicated. The truth is that the terms poverty and riches had become, through historical circumstances, inextricably confused: they were partly economic and partly religious. Poor had come to mean pious, because the poor were actually pious, and the pious had found they were compelled to be poor. Riches less often, but sometimes, is equivalent to violent, as may be seen in the parallel: "They made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death."

The interpretation of economic poverty and spiritual riches is, however, forced upon us by the facts of the Incarnation. No one can deny that Jesus was in this life economically poor; and few would hold that the life of the spiritual world was economic at all; there the riches must be spiritual. And it is the teaching of the Gospel in more than one place that economic poverty is the necessary prelude to spiritual riches. We are to sell all we have that we may have treasure in heaven. We are to be faithful with the unrighteous mammon if we are to be entrusted with the true riches. We are to make friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when it fails, they may receive us into everlasting habitations. And this is not to be condemned as the device of making the poor content with their poverty by promising them something in heaven afterwards. Heaven is to be possessed now. Blessed are the spiritual poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Heaven is to come for us here as the reward of ordering life on a basis of poverty. That seems to be the teaching of Jesus. Has it any guidance for the practical and pressing problems of these times?

WHAT IS THE APPLICATION OF THIS TO OUR PRESENT DISTRESSES?

1. Let us contrast how the economic struggle of our time appears.

On the one hand, those who are in the modern movement for the emancipation of labour from industrial slavery are profoundly convinced that that movement

has in it an idealistic element which is truly religious. They declare that there is an unselfishness, that there is a sense of a mighty cause which is the cause of humanity, that is nothing but the translation of Christian principles into the realms of economics. They feel that same thrill of hope and conviction which has characterized religion; and for many people the emancipation of the working classes has become the substitute for religion. Yet to many others it presents an entirely different spectacle. It seems nothing but a desire on the part of the working classes to tyrannize over others, to use the powers they possess to wreck this present system out of mere vengeance and spite, and thereby bring suffering upon all, only to discover that they have destroyed one system in order to put nothing in its place. For it will be found that there is nothing but anarchy and starvation to follow. Some take a middle position, though it is somewhat detached. They blame both sides equally. The whole struggle is between the "haves" and the "have nots," as they generally phrase it; it is engendered on both sides by greed and the desire to be rich quickly and without work. Both classes are entirely unchristian in their attitude; nothing is to be gained by hating the rich: it is not the Christian programme to make everybody rich.

The first thing that has to be said about these opinions is that they may be right or wrong, but they do not help us in the present situation. The forces which represent government, employment, and those living on invested capital, and the forces which represent the governed, the employed, and those living on wages, are

separating out into two great hostile camps. It is useless to point out that they overlap and have common interests in many ways. There is a difference of feeling to be reckoned with, and that feeling has reached a stage when it means war. Efforts to bring both sides together often only exasperate both sides. There can never be a reconciliation of capital and labour under the present system. Moreover, this system is certainly going to disappear. Whether it is overturned by revolution, or coming to a stop through merely ceasing to function, its days are numbered. But has any one thought what are going to be the results of the attempt to overturn it by revolution, or how long drawn out its expiring efforts will be? The Labour Movement might persuade the economic, professional and business world that the interests of all mankind were identical with the Labour Movement: that would be one way of advance. But before the programme of Labour could succeed, if it could get its way, it would have to get a religious sanction, inspiration, and loyalty. Last May Day I watched the Labour procession straggling into Hyde Park. There was a great deal pathetic about it, but there was something prophetic, too. Near to the end of the procession there came a group carrying a crucifix leading a section of those who were both for religion and labour, both for Christianity and revolution, both for dogma and Socialism. If that crucifix could work up the line until it headed and dominated the procession it would mean more, not only for the Labour Movement, but for the Church. After all, is it not the Church's place? Would not Christ be most at home with such

people? Would it then not be in the apostolic succession? Whose fault is it that the procession was headed by the Socialist Sunday Schools, that the presence of the crucifix seemed to many so out of place? Is not the fault with Christian people? Many may dislike these economic convictions. They may be wrong: we are not infallible. But what is your alternative, what is the Christian basis? It is no use standing aside and criticizing, saying we have nothing to do with these questions, saying that Socialism would not work until all men were Christians. Will it work until all Christians are Socialists? There may be hate, carelessness, ignorance among these people; they may not be the class we should choose to associate with; but what about our Lord's association with us? Must we not follow Him in going down to the people, instructing them, making their cause ours?

2. What ultimate solution does the Incarnation point out?

We can suggest that it stands for individual poverty and corporate riches: Jesus became poor that *we* might be rich. This is what the Franciscan scheme worked out to, and not without something natural and right about it: individual members of the community having the barest modicum of personal possession, but the Order as a whole being rich. There is no reason why people should not be content to be individually poor if the community could be rich. People only want to get individually rich because there is no corporate possession of the fundamental necessities, there is no corporate provision of work if it is wanted, no corporate reserve for emergencies. All those things

which spell riches, ownership of land, things of expensive beauty, could be communally owned. That is how it is in heaven. There they do not use gold for lining pockets, but they do for paving the streets; they do not adorn themselves with jewels, but they build the walls with them. That is not mere poetry; it is sober economics. We see that a little in building our churches. We do not feel it right to spend too much on our private house, but whoever thought it wrong to spend millions on a church? And there can be no objection to it if the Church is the house of God, and therefore the home of the people.

The second suggestion is that economic poverty should go alongside spiritual riches. The question might remain over, What would be the standard of poverty if things were more equalized? It has been said that if the property of rich men was all divided up, it would not make a very great difference to the poor; the standard of equality would not be much above that of decent poverty to-day. That may be so, but that would not be contrary to Christianity, for our Lord never hoped to see people wealthy; He did not think it was good for the soul. But it is this dead level which frightens some people. They say it would take away all incentive if there were not rewards to encourage us. It is the hope of living in Park Lane which keeps London at work, and if there were no chances of Park Lane no one would work at all. It must be admitted that if the reward of getting rich was removed, some people would never work, but it is questionable whether that characterizes the working class more than it does the upper class. Still, there

is the need of providing some substitute for this bait of possible millionairessdom. And surely that is just what religion is for: it gives to us the idea of living for others, serving others, sacrificing ourselves for others. And that idea is seizing hold of many people; it only wants an organism through which it can be carried out; and it can only be carried out if the products of labour belong to the community. Some will object that the dead level will be so uninteresting. We shall have no more patrons of art and letters, no persons set apart by wealth and leisure to be poets and artists. But is the present system a true friend to the arts? Was it a wealthy nation which produced the Bible, or built the cathedrals, or painted the great pictures? We do not want a dull and colourless life. But cannot spiritual things provide the rich realities, and can they ever be known to be real until they are held alongside a relative poverty—a poverty that has to work, and to work hard, for very little? If we want to make religion a real thing, we must cultivate an imagination which can enjoy spiritual realities. This struggle after riches, this mad bid for pleasure at all costs, this recourse to intoxication—what is it but the sign of a soul that has lost the true riches?

What, then, is the Church's way and the Christian contribution? It is the preaching of the Kingdom of Heaven—the Kingdom which means righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. It is to persuade people that these are the things that count. It is to show that Christian doctrine commits us to an economic basis, which cannot be very different from that which Socialism proposes. It is for the Church

to evangelize the rich, and try to convert them to take the people's position, to call upon youth to renounce possessions, position, superiority. That will discover the objective of Christianity, that will renew the faith. It will re-establish doctrine, show the necessity of the Church, bring back the Sacraments, make it easy to believe in God. It will not only redeem labour, it will renew the Church, and it will save the world.

II

THE DISCOVERY OF GOD IN THOUGHT

"He hath made everything beautiful in its time: also He hath set the world in their heart, yet so that man cannot find out the work that God hath done from the beginning even to the end."—ECCLESIASTES iii. 11.

This translation of a very difficult Hebrew original makes a somewhat depressing, but unfortunately only too true statement concerning man; for it does seem that this passing, secular scheme of things holds his heart. But it is just possible, as the Revisers' marginal reading suggests, that the word translated "world" really means "eternity"; and then the text becomes one of the profoundest in the Bible, and agrees with what the deepest philosophy has discovered, namely, that the sense of eternity or endlessness in the thought of man prevents him from finding complete satisfaction in the works of God in nature, however beautiful they may be. Therefore, although the observation of nature may teach him much, it is in his own thoughts that man will best discover God.

It is this way to God through thought that I want to commend. Unfortunately, it is a very neglected way, and that for three reasons. It is assumed that it is a way which only a few can take. Thought comes very difficult to most people. Consistent, exploring, persistent thought is an exercise of which they soon tire—indeed, of which they seem almost incapable. But we have to distinguish carefully between the compli-

cated processes which a trained philosopher may use and the swift and simple process of intuition, which may yet arrive at exactly the same end by what is after all precisely the same road. By means of intuition, if the word has any intelligible meaning, we arrive in a flash at the end which reason only reaches with immense labour; and this gift of intuition is possessed by many who have little logical training and no philosophical knowledge. The logician or philosopher only goes slowly over the same ground, testing every step. What is wanted by simple or learned alike is sincerity: the desire to reach the truth; persistence: the refusal to stop short of the end; clearness: the abhorrence of vagueness and the careful registration of all conclusions reached. This kind of thinking is possible to every one, and in matters of religion is a duty which devolves upon all. "Why do ye not judge for yourselves what is right?" "What think ye?" "Prove all things: hold fast that which is good."

Another reason why this way to God is so deserted is that so many seem to have lost themselves in taking it. There is an idea abroad, in which freethinkers and religious people often agree, that thinking about religious subjects leads to scepticism and even to atheism. Catholicism demands the submission of the individual mind to the decisions of the Church, lest one should miss one's way and lose the truth altogether; and this demand seems to be sanctioned not only by the number who by trying to think for themselves have made shipwreck of faith, but also by the utter confusion and disagreement into which individual think-

ing leads so many. The people who call themselves rationalists claim, with a dogmatism that puts Catholicism into the shade, that if you think along the lines of pure reason you will have to abandon all religion; but the truth is that philosophers, believing themselves to follow pure reason, still come to very different conceptions of the universe. But not only Catholics dread individual thought; Protestants do also. I was early warned not to go too deeply into things; if I did not lose my faith in the process, I certainly should my reason. Now, I take authority to be neither a prohibition of thought nor a substitute for thought; for even if you accept the authority of the Catholic Church in such a way that you never do any more thinking, because it has all been done for you already, you first of all have to decide that the Catholic Church is a body which possesses this authority; a piece of very difficult reasoning. I take it rather that the use of authority is to compare with and check one's own thinking by reference to a larger body of thinkers; and I think it is not unfair to say that Catholic Theology represents the greatest consensus of free thinking upon important subjects that mankind has achieved. At some point we must search for agreement, but surely it is best to do that after we have been thinking for ourselves; for, as Newman has finely said, "truth is wrought out by many minds working freely together."

The third reason why the way of thought is so often neglected is that it seems to encourage subjectivism, a danger of which people are not sufficiently afraid; instead, they seem to revel in it. The danger of sub-

jectivism is encouraged by the careless way in which we often speak of seeking for God within rather than without. The distinction is psychologically meaningless. We search the world without by means of mind, and mind is neither within nor without, but is the door between the visible and the invisible. It is as foolish to speak of finding God within, as if we carried Him about in a little box, as of finding Him without. It is a worse danger of subjectivism when a man tests matters of religion only by what appeals to him or what satisfies him. That may be all very well for choosing the colour of your clothes or the kind of food you prefer; but it is no criterion for religion, which must be *what every man needs*. Equally dangerous is the attitude which has been taken up lately among thoughtful men who a generation ago would have proclaimed themselves sceptics. In revolt from the barren negations into which scepticism was leading them, they have fashioned a "God of the heart" about whose objective reality they do not care or inquire. That is a fatal and an entirely irreligious attitude. The supreme religious concern is for reality. Is it true? If it cannot abide that test it is not religion.

Let us now try this somewhat neglected way for ourselves, and since it evidently has difficulties and pitfalls, let us inquire first—

HOW TO SEARCH FOR GOD IN THOUGHT

I. We must look carefully both to the end and the beginning of our thought.

A great deal of what passes for thought is nothing

else than a procession of ideas; it does not matter in what order they come, and they are submitted to no test. That is not thinking; and often we are led away by ideas because they are attractive, beautiful, or, in these days, because they are novel or paradoxical or suitable for making people jump. This is not what is meant by thought, which must be an orderly consistent process in which we try to discover truth in its wholeness and finality.

Now, it is always well to be wary of any train of thought until you see where it leads, where it ends up. You must carry your thought to its logical conclusion before you dare admit it as true. That does not mean that if it seems dangerous or destructive of all that you have believed in, you must give up thinking along that line. No! truth though the heavens fall. Suppose that, as far as you can, you think things clearly through, and you can see that your thinking is going to lead you to the conclusion that Christianity is wrong or that there is no God. I do not mean that then you are to stop; it is a serious conclusion, and you will want to go back and test every step; but this alone should not deter you. I mean you are to go on, but ask yourself a still further question; for there is one: If there is no God, *what then?* Not so much, What then shall I do; how shall I order my life? We leave all practical considerations aside for the moment. But, What about my thinking; what value is there now in my search for truth; what does truth actually mean? If there is no God, is there such a thing as truth, and can thought reach it? For if the conclusion that there is no God involves the further conclu-

sion that there is no truth, I have come along a line which has landed me in absurdity. My conclusion has denied my premise, and discredited the whole process of reasoning.

And I advise you, if you cannot find any step in your reasoning to be wrong, to go back to the *beginning* and examine where you set out from; see if the starting-point was right, examine the presumptions; see if you really began at the beginning. Now, this is admittedly difficult, for it is impossible, as all philosophy has proved, to start from something that does not already assume something before it, which does not already take something for granted. Descartes, you will remember, tried to get back to the very beginning in his thought, and he proposed as the only possible starting-place: I think, therefore I am. But, as subsequent philosophers have found out, there were a good many unexamined presumptions in that statement. Who, or what, is I? In using the pronoun "I" he has already assumed his conclusion *I am*. "I"; that involves the unity of the subject, the differentiation from its object, and their reconciliation; all sorts of things. And it is on this first statement that philosophy has been ever since engaged. First philosophy turned itself to the problem of what thought is, and how it brings true knowledge of objects and itself; that is called epistemology. And because this question could not be answered without assumptions, philosophy has turned to investigate what is meant by "I"; that is called psychology. It cannot be said that the results have taken us any nearer to the beginning of things.

Now, is that not just what the tired thinker called

"The Preacher" declared? "He hath made everything beautiful in its time; He hath set eternity in their heart; but no one can find out the beginning or the end of things or thought." Well, even if so, it is very salutary for one who prides himself on his thinking to be able to recognize that while he believes he thinks clearly on the little scale of thought that he can use, he cannot see where his thought leads him or where it begins. At any rate, that gives us humility. Leaving that for the present, I propose as the next caution:

2. Examine what is involved in thought itself.

This sounds a formidable exercise, and indeed it is; but it can be made simple. Let us look at it this way: I cannot find where my thought comes from, and I cannot see where my thinking is going to lead me; but at the same time I cannot stop thinking; if I do, I shall stop living. I must think; and I shall get nothing done unless I do. What, then, is involved in this necessary act of thought? Now, let us suppose that we are going to set ourselves to solve the problem of existence, to find the meaning of the universe, to search for the origin and destiny of our being, to try to find God; what we must first ask ourselves is whether our thought is capable of dealing with such vast problems. We immediately become very humble and say, of course not. How can I expect my thought to solve anything so complicated and deep-seated? So you become an agnostic; you say, I do not know. But it is impossible to rest in such a position. There are really very few agnostics. Very few say, I do not know, and stop there. They go on to say, We cannot know; which is not agnosticism, but dogmatism. It declares that

thought is unmatched to its task. But to be sure of that you must first have done a lot of thinking. So all the time we are being forced to think. Our thought *may* be inadequate to solve these problems, but it is all we have, and we had better see what use we can make of it.

But if we are shut up to using our thought, and if we are bound to trust our thought, we must go on to inquire what would be required to make our thought the way to truth. It involves one of three propositions: (1) Our thought is the product of the physical machinery of our brains, and therefore ultimately of the material universe. This is called Materialism. We can reject it at once. For if it is true that all thought is the inevitable outcome of material changes in the brain, then the very idea of truth has been destroyed; for the outcome of all brains is then of the same value. No one can think differently from what he does; he can no more help it than he can help his other physical processes. Materialism is then only an inevitable way of thinking which certain kinds of brains have; and that tells you all about its value. If you ask, Is it true? the answer is, there is no meaning in the term. Thus materialism, as a theory of what is true, is a conclusion that vitiates its own claims. Looking to the end lands us in absurdity. (2) It is our thought which creates the universe; thought is the only reality. This is called Idealism, but "Ideatism" would be better. It declares that we never perceive anything but ideas, and that what we take to be something outside us is really only an idea in our heads. Now, no one can disprove that. And in the reaction from the material-

ism which is now so discredited, people are adopting idealism. They tell us that we each make our own world, that the world is nothing but our own thoughts, and therefore if we only look after our thoughts we can make our own world and live in it with ease. Pain, evil and sin are not real; it is only thinking makes them so. But then surely, by the same argument, there are no such things as pleasure or good; and if there is no error, there is also no truth. Although this theory is difficult to disprove, it disproves itself, for it makes truth meaningless; anything we think is true. But no one really believes in it for long, simply because we are always bumping into things which no amount of thought will think away. (3) There must be thoughts, and there must be also things. This position is called Realism, and it is often rejected because it is simply common sense, which philosophers are often too proud to accept. It involves the conclusion that though thought and things are so utterly different, you can think truly about things, because things are translatable into thought and thought into things; and this must be because there is something which connects them. This something must be higher than them both, something from which they both derive their being and their possible harmony. And this involves Theism, the belief in God who is Spirit and who yet created things in order to give Spirit expression. Now, whenever we think, we are assuming that there is some relation between things and thought, that this relation is not to be found in reducing the one to the other, but in supposing the existence of Spirit from which both derive. When-

ever you think you assume that. Therefore God is the fundamental datum of all thought. If your thought leads you to the conclusion that there is no God, then you deny in your conclusion what you assume in the process, which is absurd. All thinking involves faith in God, who alone makes thinking possible, of value, and will guide it to the truth.

3. Use *all* the faculties of your mind.

Reasoning is not the only faculty of mind; there is also feeling, and there is action; indeed, the mind always uses all three, or no one of them is ever really done. Now, rationalists are those who say that the only test of truth is that which is given by pure reason; so that we must eliminate all feeling, and we must disregard what its results on action will be. Now the truth is that there is no such thing as pure reason devoid of feeling. If we are going to search for truth, we must first have some strong feeling to move us to undertake the task: there must be a *desire* for truth. There must be the feeling that truth exists and is possible to attain. But even when we find truth, how shall we know that we have found it? Very largely by feeling. Sometimes when we have argued about a thing we come to a certain conclusion, or, more often, other people drive us by argument to some conclusion which, although we cannot see any way of escape, we *feel* is wrong. Feeling cannot determine logic, but it can often reveal to us that a thing is wrong before we can find the logical proof of it. Logic never goes wrong, when it is rightly used; but logic is full of fallacies for the unwary; and feeling is often a very valuable check. So when you come

to a conclusion which strikes you cold, which rouses no emotion, which kills all feeling, you may very rightly inquire where you have gone wrong, since it was feeling which led you to commence the search. And action, too, is a test. It is not the test which some have proposed—namely, that the success of action determines whether a thing is true; for that evacuates the term “truth” of its meaning; it determines success and not truth. And although we may hope that eventually nothing but truth will prevail, that involves great faith in God. Yet reason remains the master-faculty of the mind, and is not to be determined by the success of action; though the failure of action may often reveal to us that reason has been unconsciously outraged. Therefore you must use feeling, and you ought to test things by action; for if these are put out of court by what seems reason, you may doubt whether it is reason at all. It is in the ringing together of these three that we have the assurance that the truth is reached. Therefore set before yourself the highest desires you have, test them by reason, see if you can believe in them sufficiently to venture all upon them; and when they hold together thus, encouraging the heart, satisfying the mind, giving power to the will, that is what is called faith. This, then, is how the search for God in thought should be conducted.

Now we can turn to inquire

WHAT THOUGHT DISCOVERS ABOUT GOD

I. The Immanence of the Transcendent.

When we think, we find that involved in all our thought is something which itself transcends thought. This transcendence splits up into three analysable parts—eternity, infinity, and perfection. If we try to think backward or forward the mind gets tired, but never so tired that it cannot see that its thinking ought to go on further still. We know that there is no beginning or end to anything, and that wherever we draw a line in time, there is still more time beyond it. This illimitable time we call eternity. Something always has been, and always will be. Eternity, everlastingness, is in our hearts. It conditions all our thinking; it makes us discontented with anything that comes to an end. But this inability to think an end to time is also an inability to think an end to space. As far as the eye can travel we know that there is further distance still, and when thought can go no further we know that there is still further to go. But there is a more wonderful thing still in our mind, and that is the thought of the infinite in perfection—the moral infinite. There is nothing so beautiful that there is not something conceivably more beautiful, nothing so good that there is not something conceivably better.

Now these notions are not to be regarded as negative abstractions of the mind set over against the only realities: the temporal, the limited, and the imperfect. We only realize the brevity of time, the limits of what we see, the imperfection of all we reach, because over against this, and as its background, there is the infinite. And it is no passive idea which may interest philosophers or communicate something wonderful to mystics; it is one of the most active things in our

life. It is the sense of the enduring which makes death so really inconceivable and immortality the ever disturbing dream of man. It is the sense of the infinitely great which makes it impossible for us to be content with the visible world which only blinds our sight; it is the pressure of moral perfection which has given us the conception of God. And these thoughts are the real springs of human progress, the discontent which disturbs us, the spur of all our striving; so that nothing we can ever reach in this world is likely to satisfy man. It is this infinite, however dimly conceived, and by so many disregarded, which is the positive against which all else is set as unnatural and negative. Our endless disappointment with ourselves, and our continual criticism of others, arises from this pervading sense of the infinitely perfect. Man's feeling of sin is the great witness to the existence of something sinless. The continual reference of the mind back from its own thinking to its infinite ground is the great discovery of philosophic thought.

2. The activity of the passive.

We have seen now the infinite conditions of our thought, but there is about it a certain strange passivity and quietness which cannot be its ultimate reality. What is this eternity we have discovered: is it merely the existence of unmeasured time? What is it that transcends all the distance we can measure: is it simply empty space? The thought is corrective, restful; but why does it simply make us sleepy? Would these thoughts not stop all effort with the reflection that all will soon be over and our efforts end only in stillness? Would not the sense of illimitable space

merely make us feel that our world and especially ourselves are so small that they are lost and worthless?

This is corrected by that other infinite—the moral infinite. That seems to urge us on, never to let us rest with the sense of accomplishment. Here is a clue that what seems so passive, almost destructive of our thought and activity, is really the spring of all thought and being. It is for the lack of sensing this moral infinite that some religions and some philosophic ideas have been so desolating and paralysing in their effect. But if the spirit is brought to quiet before these wonderful thoughts and is held in stillness, two things soon make themselves felt: that these are the great realities, and that this is what is alive. When we are still, then this background is seen to move and throb. We are not at a background on which our lives are pinned like butterflies impaled, vainly trying to get free. This is that in which we live and move and have our being; and therefore itself is life and movement and the source of all that is. This conviction does not come very easily; thought itself does not come to it all at once, though it is never denied by thought; but it is something which can be easier felt than thought. This is where it is necessary to wait and be still, to meditate and to listen. Here is a point where thought lays down its busy ways and confesses it has brought us as far as it can. But deeper thought, the working of the unconscious mind, soon discovers that eternity, infinity, perfection is not just emptiness, no mere idea, but is being, spiritual activity, supreme personality.

3. The impulse towards the incarnation of the Divine.

What shall be our relationship to this which thought has discovered? It cannot be mere activity on our part; for THIS is the active against which our bustle is mere fuss. It cannot be mere passivity on our part. It must be a new relationship in which that greatness, that immortality, that perfection is increasingly absorbed by us in a life of communion, submission, dedication and service. As we wait on the threshold of the infinite we grow ashamed at our own littleness, we are moved to make ourselves more like that which we have discovered; there is a constant pressure which bids us become like that which we have glimpsed in thought. Thought has therefore brought us to God, infinite, immanent, incarnating; it has brought us to God, the Father, the Spirit, and the Son. The whole of Christian revelation is assumed in the inspiration, the activity, the direction of our thought. If you will only think you may work your way through all the great religions with their differing conception of God, but you must come at last to the religion which sums them all up. All this, if you think things together, and to the end, and if you examine the implications of your thought as you go. Here in your own mind is a clue which, if followed to the end, will bring you face to face with God.

III

EVOLUTION AND THE FALL

"Through one man sin entered into the world."—ROM. v. 12.

"For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God."—ROM. viii. 19.

Few things could be less expected than that the first popular theological controversy to emerge after the Great World War should be concerning the Fall of man. Most of us have been brought up in the generation which succeeded Darwin and which on the whole accepted his account of the origin of man, namely that man was not a specially created species, but that he developed as a variation from some animal ancestry. Those of us who have been trained in modern Biblical criticism had never been taught that we were to look in the early chapters of Genesis for a scientific account of the creation of the world or the origin of man. We were told that the early chapters of Genesis are a monotheistic adaptation of Babylonian cosmogonies and of myths which exist in similar forms among all peoples; and we were to look for its inspiration in the higher moral and theological level which it reached, in its dignified and poetic beauty, and in the general truth of its referring everything existing ultimately to the creation of God, with the exception of sin, which it traced to some disobedience on the part of man. It therefore never occurred to those of us who belong to the last generation, not only in time but in sym-

pathy, that there could be any question of real conflict between the story in the Bible and the account given by science. The Biblical story of man's creation and sin is a moral parable, and by its very form is obviously meant to be so; the story of science is a hypothesis put forward to account for a number of facts concerning the bodily structure of man: its likeness to the bodies of certain animals, the remains of primitive man, the biological history of the human foetus, and the backward condition of existing savage tribes. The one tells the inner and spiritual, and the other the outer and physical history of man. Both may be perfectly true.

But evidently there is something still not cleared up. There always were a number of unsolved questions, and they remain still in much the same position; not only detailed criticisms of the possibility of the Darwinian hypothesis being entirely true, but larger issues as to what deductions as a whole were to be drawn from this scientific account of man's emergence; whether it did not dispense with the idea of a Creator altogether, and whether it did not discredit the doctrine of the Fall and explain sin as due to the survival in man of animal instincts. It may be that the real issue has never been seriously faced. But we have seen the failure of all efforts to make evolution an automatic process which explained the gradual emergence of sentient and conscient life from inorganic matter; for philosophy has exposed its assumptions and science has never demonstrated its possibility. Since Darwin, criticisms have arisen which have compelled scientists to modify some of his conclu-

sions; especially his idea that evolution was due to natural selection working upon infinite minute variations to secure through the struggle for existence the survival of the fittest. There has come about a general admission that evolution does not explain anything, but is the thing still to be explained. The comparison of our early Scriptures with the records and the primitive myths from which they are supposed to be derived has only served to bring out their independence and spiritual inspiration. But it may be that we have perhaps too easily settled down to the idea that there is nothing vital to religion in what once was conceived to be an acute issue. What is being raised now is the suggestion that systems of theology which assumed that the story of Adam in the garden was actual accurate history must be falsified by that assumption. It is not suggested that sin is not real or redemption unnecessary, but, somewhat vaguely, that sin and redemption ought to be conceived differently; though exactly how is not stated. Evidently the whole question must be threshed out again; but if so, it will have to be with the clear recognition that the situation has been modified on the scientific side by criticism and further thought, and that beyond the vague proposals to alter doctrine to suit the scientific hypothesis, there still lurks the supreme issue whether God is any longer necessitated or whether any moral fall in a creature like man is not a mistaken diagnosis of his condition.

It will perhaps contribute to the ease of the discussion to remind ourselves that the actual phrase "the Fall" occurs neither in the Bible nor in the Creeds. The doctrine of the Fall is derived primarily from St.

Paul, who speaks of one man through whom sin entered into the world, which he transmitted to posterity: but he uses this only to contrast it with our redemption by Christ, and actually refers to Adam as a "figure" of him that was to come; so that it might be unjust to St. Paul to think that he built upon the historicity of Adam's sin. But if St. Paul can be blamed for introducing this idea, it ought to be remembered that he also introduced the idea of the evolution of a new race of men, whose head was Christ, the last Adam.

We can therefore examine the whole question of the scientific account of the origin of man with perfect calmness, while at the same time remaining alert to questions whether proposals to alter doctrine do not carry us further than their authors contemplate or desire.

THE ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF MAN IS IRRELEVANT TO THEOLOGICAL AND MORAL QUESTIONS

I. The origin of man does not determine his career.

It has yet to be proved that the Darwinian hypothesis is true. There are still many difficulties against accepting it. If man has evolved from the animal we ought to be able to find not only some creature who can be called in popular phraseology "the missing link," but many missing links bridging what after all is a great gulf. The remains bearing on this issue which have been found are very few, and their significance is hotly disputed by scientists themselves—both their age, and whether they are human or animal, or

mere abnormalities. When there are instanced whole races of men such as the cave-dwellers, or neolithic man, who are represented as very low in the scale of progress, because they knew nothing of the use of fire or metal, we come across two disturbing facts, one that they could draw very creditably, with accuracy and lifelike vigour, and secondly that they had quite strong beliefs in the existence of higher beings and in a life beyond the grave; in short, that they compare favourably with many modern men in artistic expression and religious sensibility. It is curious also that we have existing to-day both animal species which show no signs of development in a higher direction, and savage races who cannot develop without dying out. These races either sprang spontaneously from animal ancestry at different periods in different places, a hypothesis which science does not welcome, and then we ought to find whole tribes of intermediates, or, if they all sprang from a common ancestor, as is more widely held, then they must have degenerated, a possibility which has to be seriously considered; for their beliefs often show survivals of some higher faith than those which they now follow. In addition, we know nothing in other branches of life where such wide variations occur, as man's descent from the higher quadrumana presupposes; and although species do vary, the whole problem of the origin of species is complicated by the fact that our classification into species is mainly for convenience and is otherwise arbitrary.

But even if the Darwinian hypothesis is true, it may only concern man's physical nature. Darwin cer-

tainly thought that the division between animal instinct and human intellect, between herd customs and social morality, could be bridged by allowing for gradual changes over enormous areas of time; but some of his distinguished disciples have gravely questioned this, and have felt that the emergence of man as a spiritual being, even if as a spirit which inhabits a body originally animal, demands a new development which represents a new creation, a fresh invasion from a spiritual realm. The fact that the animals remain in existence without further development, that many of them have developed along lines other than that which is supposed to have issued in man and have reached a finality of perfection along those lines, as in the case of ants or bees, seems to show that this hypothesis of the incarnation of a spirit in a specially prepared body is not unreasonable. And this hypothesis does not allow us to assume that this double ancestry of animal and spirit is responsible for what we call sin, which could then be explained as the result of surviving animal instincts warring against and overcoming man's spiritual nature; for man's sins are not mainly animal. What are often called bestialities really constitute a libel on the animal creation, for the animals are generally remarkably restrained in their appetites, do know when they have had enough, and do not indulge in sexual perversions, save, strangely enough, where they have been domesticated by man. And it is not man's herd instinct that wars against his developed conscience; for his social sins are a repudiation of the herd instinct in pursuit of a selfish individualism which no savage would practice.

But even if the appearance of conscious spiritual life were a gradual evolution from animal instinct, we should not have eliminated the possibility that at some time in history man took a wrong development. Although the story of man's disobedience in Genesis may be only a myth, a poetic version of something that could not be described historically, since it may have been a gradual process, yet it has a certain scientific value and a clear moral significance. It does not tell us of a fall from some exalted intellectual or moral state. Adam is depicted as completely uncivilized and without moral consciousness. What is represented is a choice which was an advance, but not the best kind of advance, the preference of knowledge to life. And this choice has been continually repeated in the historic career of man; the lust of curiosity rather than the desire for moral perfection; the choice of the knowledge of good and evil rather than of power to achieve good. It is interesting to notice that in the development of the animal species this same sort of choice seems to have been anticipated on a lower level. Some animals have developed enormous strength in order to resist their enemies, but these bulky creatures have been outdistanced by those who developed brain instead of bulk: compare the ant with the mammoth; some animals in fear armoured themselves with heavy carapace for defence, while others trusted to the ingenuity of movement: compare the tortoise and the hare; choices which nations now are making. It looks as if to all creatures there was given some freedom of choice, and that some took a choice which led them to stagnation or a *cul-de-sac*; and that when man

emerged he made the same sort of mistake. Yet we cannot explain his mistake as due to theirs, for it was from the stock which had chosen the open way of advance that man inherited.

2. The fact of evolution is neither an explanation of the past nor guarantee of the future.

If it is a fact that there has been a gradual development of life forms from one level to another, and that this can be traced across all the gaps between self-consciousness and animal instinct, between vital phenomena and chemical action or mechanical forces, so that we could say man has developed from the very dust, we have only pushed the question of origins further back, and in endowing matter with all the promise and potency of life have only destroyed our definition of matter. Moreover, this gradual rise and continual advance have still to be explained. They are often taken for granted as self-explanatory.

Two things are much more easy to explain; the one, that things should remain for ever the same, for the reason is baffled by the appearance of anything really new; and the other, deterioration, which on a naturalistic automatic hypothesis is what we should expect. The explanation of a series of continual infinitesimal changes is itself inexplicable, and that these tiny changes should serve a distant purpose, and that one series should lead upwards when so many others come to a standstill, are facts which demand some other force than the chemical or mechanical. And when it is proposed, as some have done, that this force, which otherwise might be called God, must be regarded as also subject to evolution, we throw away the one clue

that we have. If God evolves, how is that, and why does He evolve into something better?

The popular arguments that have been based upon an evolutionary process conceived as inherent and automatic are of the most baseless kind. If evolution has been of this nature, then we can trust it to go on evolving by the same process. This belief has dominated our reading of the past and our hopes of the future. A great deal of the attempt to construct pre-historical conditions must still be classified as fiction based upon insufficient and questionable evidence; but that is a small mistake compared with the argument which assumes that because of this the future of the world can take care of itself and that everything we think and do to-day is necessarily better than what we did and thought yesterday. The progress of the human race in actual history is being gravely questioned at present. About progress in mechanical inventions and scientific knowledge there can be no dispute, nor about the growth in feeling, which has ended spectacular suffering and the infliction of torture in order to educate the soul; but whether we have advanced at anything like the same rate in morality and in the adjustment of human relationships is open to question. Those of us who have seen the most cultured races in Europe going back in war-time to conditions both of life and morals which are only too reminiscent of cave-dwellers, if that is not an insult to those little-known persons; when we have seen a whole people not only apathetic to the frightful effects of the peace they make, but actually justifying what is wholesale torture in order to secure corporate repentance, it is pos-

sible to question whether man has made any considerable advance either in ethics or even in sentiment. When one compares the culture of ancient Greece, the religious ethics of the Hebrew Prophets, and the art and social organization of mediæval times with the standards which control us now, it is open to any one to dispute any confident and cheerful view that we are growing and in the right direction.

But there is no need to fall into the opposite error, and conclude that the history of man is the story of a constant decline from some golden age far back in the past. The truth is that there is a constant struggle going on in human history between two ideals of progress, that which measures by material and that which measures by spiritual gain, and that man is continually taking the former, when by taking the latter he could use the material so much better. There is repeated over and over again in all of us the tragic mistake which we are told about in Genesis. If knowledge could save us, we should have been saved long ago. We not only choose the wrong kind of knowledge, but even the knowledge of the right does not enable us to follow it. It is not only that the sublime teaching of Jesus and of the Bible generally occurred so long ago, before coal was discovered, or steam applied, or printing used, but one can cull maxims from Greek thinkers and from Indian and Chinese seers long before then, which man has never yet followed. And where there has been evolution it has been through the work of great individuals, and in the main through individuals who responded to spiritual ideals and declared themselves to be in communion with God.

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL SALVATION

1. What we are and what we may be are the more pressing concerns.

The survey of the far distant past, the efforts to penetrate beyond the records and monuments and reconstruct prehistoric times, the speculations as to how this world began and man emerged, are fascinating and full of attraction; but the vital history of the race may be studied closer at hand in our own personal problem. Just as the foetus in the womb recapitulates the biological history of the race, so does the state of the soul reveal what man is and has been. We need not concern ourselves too much whether there was a solitary pair who first deserved to be classed as human and whether that first pair sinned; what more concerns us is that we find the old story all too wonderfully repeated in our own lives. Here we find the same cleavage of knowledge and action, the same sense of shame for what we are and for what we have done.

This idea that man's inner condition confirms the fact of a moral fall can be questioned, but without conviction or proof. It is written in all the intimate literature of the world; indeed it is the attempt to depict this condition which has given us our greatest literature. If we are inclined to excuse our sinfulness as due to lack of light, overbearing circumstance, or inherited weakness, we are not willing to make the same allowance for others. In our political and social enemies we can see quite clearly the case of those who have chosen the wrong path, who have sinned against the light, who have been disobedient to the heavenly

vision. And if we cannot rise to the great humility of penitence or face the confessional system which the Church recommends, then we have still to reckon with the psychoanalyst who tells us that the attempt to rationalize the conflict between our moral condition and our moral consciousness is a neurosis, which is merely of the same pathological value as any other attempt to get rid of it, and is bound to prove equally ineffectual.

The doctrine which the Christian Church has constructed is derived primarily from the general consciousness of mankind. It definitely excludes God from blame for human sin, and holds to the paradox that while man inherits sinful tendencies, he is nevertheless responsible for yielding to them. No one need deny that these are doctrines difficult to prove or reconcile, but any alternative is much more difficult. The endeavour to shield God does not rise from any mistaken chivalry on the part of man, but from the instinct that unless there is some fount of perfect goodness untainted and supreme then the world is hopeless, for it is rotten at the core. To preserve the paradox is the only way to do justice to immediate facts: that sin is universal and manifests itself very early, and that the best in us refuses to take this as an excuse for what we do. Their intellectual reconciliation we may still await, but social considerations are beginning to lighten the difficulty.

2. It is clear how social salvation comes.

We can understand that no individual sins to himself, but that his acts taint the whole structure of humanity, and that the social structure reacts to influence the individual for evil; and this involves us

all in such complicity that personal sinlessness in a sinful society is impossible. The person of advanced conscience not only feels his responsibility for his own sin, but also for the sin of society. The growing sense of responsibility for sin is therefore the inevitable condition for personal and social progress. What is wrong with modern society is its irresponsibility; and it is this which has to be broken down by a sense of unbearable guilt. The starvation of Europe, the suppression of Ireland, our industrial strife, are our concern and guilt; these things are the inevitable outcome of the personal selfishness, fear and unbelief which we find swarming within. Social sin is my sin, and my sin is social sin, and this racial solidarity extends in time as well as space.

But Christianity does not stop here. It takes a serious view of humanity; it holds that it has taken the wrong road and is incapable by itself of returning. What it therefore proposes is the origination of a new type and the formation of a new society. And for the type it proclaims Jesus Christ. It sets Him forth as the original type through, in and for which man was himself created. But He is to do more than restore man to his original innocence and dignity; He is to lift him to a new life of union with God, and with that type to create a new race which will be as far above present man as man is above the anthropoids. It is a new step in evolution; the creation of a race of beings who shall be called sons of God. But it must be noted how this new type emerges. Christ, although in His eternal Person absolutely sinless, on entering human society feels the burden of its sins, and

taking them upon Himself assumes responsibility for the sin of the whole world; and then by the baptism first of water unto repentance for sins, and then of blood unto remission of sins, sets up within His Person and the society that gathers round Him a fountain of cleansing and a generative force which shall cleanse the race at its springs and establish society on a new basis. He is the last Adam, the Head of a new race, the starting-point of the final stage in evolution.

But we must be careful to understand how evolution works. It is not merely an intrusion into the scheme from above. Christ is no intrusion into this world or into humanity; it is His by creation, His by indwelling. But neither is it a mere confluence of past factors resulting in some new thing. Evolution here, as probably always, demands some response from the creature. Implicit in the world from the beginning, so that the very procession of the heavens and the rise and fall of vegetation proclaim the story of redemption, yearned after in all the religions of the world which in their beliefs and customs all prophesy of Christ, it is by no mechanical combination of existing factors that the new race comes into existence, though they make it possible, but by a personal spiritual response to Christ. Bergson has suggested that if we could unite the factors of instinct and intellect we should have a new humanity, and Benjamin Kidd has suggested that if we could gear emotion on to an ideal, within one generation we could fundamentally alter the outlook of man. And Christianity proposes just such a synthesis. It gives a Personal Head to whom men are attached by loyalty and love; but it demands also the intellec-

tual recognition of who Christ is and why He is fitted to be the last Adam; and in addition the creation of a new society in which all humanity is knit into one body, old divisions healed and old hostilities reconciled whether of sex, class, nationality or race. It is the combination of personal religion and ethical concern, of theological conviction and social passion, the centring of humanity on Christ and the radiation of His Spirit through all, that promises to bring about this new development, which shall right the wrong of the past, undo the fall, and placing humanity on the original line of the Divine intention, make man afresh in the image of God.

IV

CHRIST AS A SCHOOL OF CULTURE

"Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart."—
MATTHEW xi. 29.

It is out of fashion to make much of the meekness of Christ. The first line of the children's hymn "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild," has been much criticized, and Mr. Bernard Shaw has declared that he can find no trace of any such person in our Gospels. Yet we not only have the declaration by Jesus Himself that this was His nature, but we have its echoes in St. Paul, who has sometimes been accused of caring little for and knowing less of the historical Jesus, when he excuses his own shyness in the presence of one of his critical congregations by appealing to the "meekness and gentleness of Christ"; and this characteristic certainly impressed the hard pagan world into which Christ came. It is the only virtue which Christ ever claimed for Himself; and the fact that He did so perhaps needs some explanation; for it has been objected that humility is a virtue it is impossible to claim; the very fact of claiming it disproves its existence. But it was not generally recognized as a virtue in Christ's time, but as a vice, or at least a weakness; and therefore it was not boasting to claim it. Moreover, it was put forward in order to justify His offer of Himself as one who had something to teach. Beautiful as these famous words are, the delicacy of their

beauty is hardly realized until it is recognized that they are an adaptation of the closing invitation of Wisdom in the Book of Ecclesiasticus. Christ is here definitely contrasting Himself with the methods of Wisdom, comparing His easy yoke with the labour of acquiring the knowledge of the schools, and at the same time making it clear that He has nothing but meekness and humility to teach. And despite the accusation that these are servile virtues, which Nietzsche has revived and popularized, and the misunderstanding which estimates them as weak and unworthy, an age perhaps better skilled in chivalry and politeness than our own has shown its appreciation of what Christ meant by making the great test of birth and breeding that of gentleness, as the word "gentleman" shows. That word is undergoing the inevitable degeneration imposed upon it by a decadent age; but it is still possible, perhaps, to quote the eulogy pronounced on Jesus Christ as the truest gentleman who ever lived with some comprehension of what was intended.

When one claims that Christ constitutes a school of culture, one remembers certain unhappy associations which have come through the German interpretation of *Kultur*, as a system of civilization which has to be forced upon people. I have turned up Sabatier's famous lecture delivered to the Religious Science Congress in Stockholm in 1897, which is entitled in the English translation "Religion and Culture," and I find that it is entirely a discussion as to how religion can be squared with the demands of modern science; not a word about culture as we understand it, as denoting a standard of appreciation and taste; something

quite different from mere learning, something which only art can add to science, a refined sensibility to delicate values, a real gentility of mind and manner.

I do not know that even in this sense Christ has ever been much thought of as a standard and school of culture. We remember that He was a peasant, a craftsman who had worked at His trade, a person who, as our Gospels actually record, had little opportunity of learning. He belonged to what we call the lower orders; and when the proletariat remind us that He was one of themselves, many are inclined to picture Him, from the little they know of the proletariat, as a noisy demagogue, a preacher of sedition and violence. Even those who understand more of Christ than the party claims of our time would make Him out to be would perhaps be diffident about making any claim concerning His culture. Jesus, despite His lowly birth and His self-chosen station, has revealed to us the realities of religion, but we must look elsewhere for our standards of culture. Jesus was not interested in art; He stood apart from that whole idea of expressing beauty which is so strong an impulse with modern man and which is such a means of joy and education. But always when I hear it claimed that Jesus can have nothing to say concerning the great interests and problems of modern life I am inclined to question it. When it is said that He taught nothing which applies to international politics or social economics, I am amazed; when it is said He could have nothing to teach about artistic taste or questions of good manners, I am doubtful. If He has not, I do not see how He could claim to be either Son of God or

Son of Man; either our Judge or our Saviour. And when I remember that at any rate He has inspired more art than any person who has ever lived, I should not be surprised if inquiry did not overturn this idea entirely.

THERE IS NO BETTER SCHOOL OF CULTURE

I. Christ can show us what is meant by good taste.

You can see that in the matter of artistic appreciation. Jesus once contrasted the common flowers of the field with Solomon in all his glory, and declared that he was never arrayed like one of these. I cannot recall anything said either by ancient sages or modern critics which reveals such sure taste as that comparison. Solomon's robes were doubtless of the most gorgeous and brilliant kind, if we can argue from the general Oriental love of colour and display; but Jesus preferred the natural form and colouring of the lilies. And I imagine that there is no need to suppose that He selected for the comparison some flaming flower whose brilliance really would surpass anything that the richest dye could imitate; but that He meant just the ordinary wild-flowers of the field or wayside. Now, there is the independence of the true artistic judgment. It knows that natural colours have a purity and a harmony which manufacture can never attain. Solomon's magnificence was such that people travelled immense distances to behold it, while no one ever troubled even to glance at the common wild-flowers which grew everywhere. The artistic taste of Jesus was not to be corrupted by the alien standards of rarity or cost;

there was only one person ever robed as Solomon, and his garments indicated his wealth; there were millions of these common flowers, and they were not worth selling; but Jesus looked at both with an unspoiled eye and said, These are more beautiful, in colour, in form, in finish. That is pure artistic taste, and nothing is more difficult to attain.

His appreciation was so sure. The one great example of that is His praise of Mary's devotion when she broke the alabaster box of ointment and poured it on His head. It might have been sold, the disciples said, and the proceeds given to the poor. Nothing could have appealed to Jesus so much as that alternative. It was just what He was always recommending His followers to do: to sell all that they had and give to the poor. Here was a deliberate destruction of value and the waste of precious ointment in an act of extravagant devotion. Yet He would not have a word of criticism. He said to the disciples, Leave her alone; she has done a beautiful thing. This is one of those deeds which have a place all alone, and they cannot be compared with anything else whatsoever, however necessary or right. It is a deed of spontaneous expression. It is a beautiful act; that is all that needs to be said, and nothing can be said against it. You will see that this story will always be remembered and appreciated down to latest time; it will be woven into the very Gospel itself; it is part of the Gospel. The artistic deed stands above all utilitarian standards. I know of nothing said in history that so sanctions art as that; it does not matter what it costs; it does not matter whether you are starving; you must always

have a place for dramatic and artistic expression of inner feeling. I do not know that we can rise to that even yet. I think the Russian was near to it who, commenting on the present situation in his country, said: "We have no bread, but we have plenty of hope."

It is seen in Christ's own self-expression. There is nowhere where the depravity of one's taste is so displayed as when one comes to talk of oneself. Christ's attitude here has provoked a great problem. It is confidently claimed for Him that He was God; and critics of the Gospels say that this cannot be supported from His own words. It does not matter whether you take the more dogmatic Fourth Gospel, which seeks to bring out the inner meaning of Christ's words, or the Synoptists, which give, perhaps, His actual words, you will find that something like this seems to be inferred, but is never unambiguously avowed. It can be shown that what He asked from men, what He declared He was and could be to them, involve nothing less than absolute Deity, but if any one cares to say there is no such explicit claim, no one can refute him. But then that is also true about all the titles applied to Him. He did not like any of them. The confession of His Messiahship had to be dragged out of Him on oath at His trial. His self-chosen name of the Son of Man is always used in the third person, so that it could be disputed whether He ever meant us to identify Him with that strange figure. It never seems to have occurred to the objectors to our Lord's Deity that God would be the last person to go about saying He was God. This reticence governs Christ's dislike of adver-

tisement of any kind. He wanted many of His miracles kept a secret. St. Matthew applies to Him the words of Isaiah, "He shall not strive, nor cry, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street." It has been said that He never founded a Church. It could be said with far more truth that He never gave any instructions that a New Testament should be written. He made no provision and took no steps to secure that a single word He ever said would be committed to writing. And when He says He is meek and lowly, He is defending this attitude, and recommending it as a reason why He could ask men to learn of Him. He believes that the truth will prevail without our pushing it, and that good news will run of its own accord.

2. Christ can even teach us good manners.

He can teach us table manners. That seems a very small thing, but it is one of the indications of refinement, of sensibility, of thoughtfulness being superior to physical need. Jesus was in the habit of dining out, apparently somewhat indiscriminately, for He seems to have gone wherever He was asked. He accepted an invitation to St. Matthew's farewell dinner to his old associates, and one would imagine that it would hardly be distinguished for good taste; the publicans must have been rather vulgar rich people. Yet Jesus defended Himself for going in a way which must have put the questioners in the wrong and set his hosts at their ease. But when He went to Simon's house, what He had to accuse him of was the impoliteness of omitting the usual Oriental courtesies shown to guests, which I suppose Simon never thought Jesus would miss. Perhaps Simon had heard that Jesus and His

disciples often ate their food without first washing their hands, and treated his guest accordingly. It was a most uncomfortable thing for Simon to be reminded that he was condescending unnecessarily. It was our Lord who advised His followers that whenever they went into society it was better to wait until they were invited to take a prominent place than to push themselves forward unasked. And you will remember how on one occasion one of those tiresome persons who will introduce intimate religious conversation at inappropriate times broke into a convivial meal with a remark of that kind, and how deftly Jesus turned the conversation by telling a story which had its point for the tactless diner and yet made every one comfortable again.

Far more important than this question of mere manners is His manner in dealing with other people. For the great test of breeding is not what manners you can put on when conversing with superiors, but what manners you display when conversing with inferiors. Now there is no doubt that in the time of Jesus women were considered inferiors. It was thought to be disgraceful for a Pharisee even to recognize his wife in public. It is the politeness which Jesus showed here which is most remarkable. There was the sinful woman who stole in at Simon's dinner and made such a trying scene with her emotional uncontrol; with what sure taste Jesus put her at her ease and brought her into the picture. There is the matchless story of the woman taken in adultery. It is not only the moral attitude Jesus takes up, but His politeness, which is so striking. His stooping to write on the ground is some-

times explained as in order to hide His own shame; surely it was to enable her to feel quite at home. He made so little of the scandalous story that He just went on writing on the ground. It is difficult to break through a social custom without being self-conscious. Yet with what perfect ease Jesus could talk to that very unsatisfactory person the woman of Samaria; to the amazement of His disciples that He even dared. He did not start out on the subject of divorce, but on the spirituality of God. What a fine approach to treat a depraved woman as if she were interested in theology. And from His general behaviour we can be sure that the apparent rudeness of the Syrophœnician woman was nothing of the kind; we have only to put the words in inverted commas and suppose that Jesus said them ironically and half humorously, repeating what a Jew would customarily say, and with a question in his voice, to see how familiar He dared to be, and what a tribute He paid to the woman's intelligence. She at any rate understood what few commentators have been able to since.

And there is what might be called His court manners. Jesus had to go through the degrading experience of being dragged before at least three judicial courts, and before some of them in a most pitiful condition, after buffoonery and after the awful torture of scourging. In this case He did the only possible thing—He kept silence; only using sometimes, when asked if He was this or that, the curious colloquialism which can only mean, That is not for Me to say. But what an effect it has. All history knows, looking back upon those scenes, that it was His judges who

were being judged. How much more regal He looked, though dishevelled and torn, clothed in mockery and streaming with blood, than Pilate seated there with all the insignia of power and authority about him. One suspects that this Man must have been used to other courts, where He was the centre and He was the judge : the courts of heaven. How different if He had argued and protested and declaimed. It is one of the great signs of good breeding to know when to keep silence. Jesus knew.

THIS SCHOOL IS OPEN TO ALL

1. It is the only one that is.

For the great majority of people there is no way to culture. They are shut out from the best educational opportunities, which are only for the wealthy. Opportunities for learning are certainly open to every one nowadays in larger measure ; there are books, there are schools, there are poor men's universities. But these things of themselves do not give culture. Indeed, a man may become very learned and be utterly devoid of culture. His taste is uneducated because he has never been able to mix at close quarters and *on equal terms* with people who have good taste ; for good taste comes through a common fellowship in things of beauty and worth. It is an atmosphere which has to be breathed, a manner which has to be caught ; it is a delicate refinement of understanding which only comes through the continual interplay of fine minds upon one another.

Even if the poor man could get into what is called

society, if he could mix with the people who had had expensive educations and the leisure that money brings, it is doubtful whether he would pick up much real refinement there to-day. The rich classes have become hopelessly vulgarized and corrupted, and the humbler classes could often teach them many things in simple manners. Aristocracy takes liberties in manners that peasant folk would never dream of taking; and perhaps no one can be quite so thoughtless and rude as people who are reckoned gentry. The delicate culture which we associate with the continual contact with great thoughts and beautiful works and fine music is a very rare thing. Life is too clamorous and blatant, feeling has been blunted not only by material luxury but by the brutalizing experiences of the last few years. The supreme mark of culture, that of understanding people and knowing how to put them at their ease and enable them to be their best, is an art which we have almost lost.

But there is a supreme school of culture still existing, and it is open for any one. It is to be found in the fact that Christ, who is both the eternal King of glory and the finest flower of humanity, offers His intimate friendship to all mankind. There is no one who can really share that friendship as an actual personal experience without being profoundly influenced in taste and manners as well as in conviction and morals. Christ teaches a man how to be humble about himself, and kind and solicitous about others. The man who knows Christ well, who by prayer is in communion with His character, is both sharpened and softened in his judgments about all things. And this

friendship is not only offered to those who are poor and unlearned, but to those who may know and possess much, but who have no grace and whose taste has been ruined by false standards. For Christ sets at work in His friends a clear and continuous self-criticism; He inspires love and hope for all men. If one has walked with Christ, one is at home in any company, because one has no fears of any one, and one has learned how to behave. It was just because Christ knew how the weary and labouring were shut out of these things that He offered them the compensation of His own school of gentleness and bade them learn of Him.

2. The Catholic Church is meant to be a school of the best culture.

It takes the poorest child of man, the denizen of a city slum or the savage from prairie, swamp or forest, and places him in the most select society. It introduces him to the communion of saints, the elect society. He is put on familiar terms with doctors, martyrs and saints; their examples are always before him and he may have them for his patrons and friends. He is taken from the life which has been cut off from the past and placed in touch with an influence which not only is the very essence of European history, but which is the only still living link with the cultures of Rome and Greece. He has the sense of history to steady and ennoble him. The very best in art, architecture, painting and music constantly interests and forms his mind. He prays in the choicest language which man can devise. He will know scraps, at least, of Greek and Hebrew; he may know a fair amount

of Latin; at least he knows of the existence of these things, and if he has the desire can soon get to know more. In the supreme rite of his worship he will learn something of table manners—how clean and careful he must be and how courteously he must behave; and the reverence which he learns to show would make him fit for the court of any earthly monarch. He will be taught in a hundred ways to express his deepest feeling in outward acts, and yet in those which are common to the whole society and do not obtrude themselves by extravagance or occasion self-consciousness.

That culture has been largely broken up by the terrible breach of the Reformation. It has cut off the old Churches from the best in modern civilization, and left it clutching in panic its inheritance from the past instead of using it to educate the present; for nowhere now is there so much dirt, tawdriness and meretricious art, though the Catholic revival is bringing a great change. It has cut off some of the most earnest Churches from the knowledge of the past, from a sense of responsibility and from great guiding traditions; and left them horribly vulgar, cocksure and vain. The condemnation of private judgment which is common in the older Churches is an exaggeration due to fear, and of such a nature that it would have made the Catholicism of the past impossible, as it would also make it impossible for any one to choose Catholicism now; but it would be no harm to other Churches if their judgments were sometimes tempered by the remembrance that others had thought deeply and felt strongly, and our judgment ought at least to be balanced by a consideration of theirs.

But this is merely to stress the outward observances and the external considerations. Catholicism means nothing if it does not invite a man farther in than that. It has not only great art to show him, but it bids him seek for the very inspiration of all art, which Christ most certainly has proved to be. It makes him not a connoisseur of art but an artist himself. The whole of external ritual and observed practice is only meant to beget in a man a certain type of character, a quiet and receptive spirit in which he will set himself before the greatest facts of reality to learn what they mean for himself. He is invited to enter for the greatest and most ambitious task of all, that of becoming a saint, and that is impossible without culture. The recipe for sainthood or culture is the same: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are to be revered, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are gracious; contemplate these things." But Catholic culture owes its power and beauty to the fact that it introduces the soul to personal contact with all the company of heaven and to a communion with Christ of the profoundest intimacy of worship, friendship and love; and that means the steeping of the soul in the nobility, the gentleness, the courtesy, the graciousness of Christ, until it gains a character and temper like His own.

V

THE NECESSITY FOR RE-EDUCATION

"Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."—MATTHEW xviii. 3.

We only discover how unique Jesus is when we attempt to classify Him. If it is claimed that He is only a Teacher, then the moment we place Him among the world's teachers we see how different from them all He is. And one of the unique things about Jesus as a Teacher is His attitude towards women and children. He is really the first of the great religious teachers to pay any attention to them. In modern times it has been made a reproach against Christianity in some of its forms that it is only fit for women and children. If it were true, it were a reproach that could be lightly borne; for, racially considered, women and children count for more than men. It is a pity that in a religion which has equalized the sexes such a comparison should ever be made; but the contempt for women dies hard; and so long as it exists it must be countered. For if it is true that women are naturally more religious than men, this can be traced to their greater racial consciousness. They continue instinctively attached to religion long after the more individualistic male has abandoned it. But you can never build religion upon individualism and irresponsibility; and these are defects which men develop

sooner than women. But, unfortunately enough, although our Lord did inaugurate a new era by His attitude towards women, treating them in all matters of religious understanding simply as persons, irrespective of sexual distinction, He never suggested that in order for men to enter His Kingdom they would have to become like women; but He did urge upon all, men and women alike, that they would have to become like little children. Men and women He treated alike, as persons: children He set up as an example of what was necessary if we were ever to become members of the Kingdom of God.

It is very questionable, however, if we have ever understood what our Lord intended by this. We have tried to adopt His estimate by regarding childhood as a period of innocence, to which, therefore, we must return. This conception has been wonderfully expressed in Wordsworth's "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality," in which childhood is conceived as the time of pure vision, which we lose as we grow older, when the glory seen by the child passes and the spirit becomes imprisoned among its own thoughts. It is very questionable whether Wordsworth is right here, and whether he himself is not the best refutation of his own theory. Certainly the praise of childhood for its innocence is often pure sentimentalism; and it is at least interesting that it is countered very definitely and even brutally by Christianity in the Doctrine of Original Sin, which teaches that children, instead of being born pure, inherit the taint of the whole race; and so far from allowing that children as such are naturally fit for the Kingdom of God, the Church has insisted

on the necessity for infants being baptized as early as possible. This doctrine has been widely rejected by the modern mind as untrue and unjust, but it is certainly reinforced by the scientific doctrine of heredity and the modern conception of man's moral solidarity. Ordinary observation can discern that the young child soon manifests a spirit which has to be checked unless it is to develop a character full of selfishness, sensuality and cruelty. And the results obtainable from the practice of psycho-analysis only further confirm this doctrine. For according to the teaching of this science, it is precisely in infant life that there are found the sexual perversions, the secret animosities and the anti-social attitude which are the seeds of so much of the conflict, unrest and breakdown of control that emerge in later life. And quite apart from the question of what supernatural grace is imparted in baptism in answer to the Church's prayer and act, it is obvious that the child needs to be incorporated into some new form of society, and a new social consciousness awakened, if it is to have a harmonious development and be fitted to live with its fellows. Therefore, if Jesus had singled out childhood as something to be returned to, because of its stainlessness or natural instinct for goodness, He would have shown Himself extraordinarily ignorant of child life.

On the other hand, authoritarian religion has tried to get near to our Lord's mind as revealed in this saying, by insisting that every one must accept religion as a child accepts things, simply on unquestioning submission to authority. But this hardly squares with the easily observable fact that this is precisely what

the child does not do. The child is the most troublesome of creatures, because of its habit of putting endless questions. To answer any child's question is only to start a train of further questions. It is true that it will accept its parents' authority if it feels that it can trust them; but the silence which is sometimes secured does not imply that the child is satisfied. There is a place in religion for authority, though it is the last rather than the first question which falls to be considered; and putting it in the foreground does not help matters. The child only comes to the question of authority by a series of questions, not by an immediate submission, and only accepts in the end that authority which rests upon love. The authority of the Church must be of the same kind; if it is presented to the inquirer at the beginning, and immediate submission demanded, it only breeds suspicion and rebellion. There must be a final resort to a living Church as the authority for the truth, but that authority, even if quite logically demanded, will only commend itself if it rests upon an obviously disinterested love for mankind. Authority is an adult problem, and our generation is only just coming to it. Therefore the recommendation to be childlike can hardly be a recommendation to receive truth merely on authority.

We get at the mind of Christ much better if we turn to the translation of this idea which we find in the Fourth Gospel, where in the interview with Nicodemus the principle is stated in an even more extreme form. There Christ lays down the necessity, not only for going back and becoming as little children, but for being born again. What both these sayings emphasize

in different ways is the necessity for starting all over again, and from the very beginning. Christ does not assume that the innocence of the child and the unquestioning mind is the thing to be copied. The point at issue is that we are wrong from our birth; and we need to be reborn, and when that is done, re-educated. It is the necessity of going back and starting all over again that our Lord announces to a world that has gone wrong. That is the radical proposal of Christianity, and it hits our proud and confident world a staggering blow. It does not say that we ought never to grow up, or use our minds, or seek education; but that we have grown up wrongly, misused our minds, been wrongly educated. It is in the things of which we are proudest—our evolution, our progress, our education—that Christ challenges us.

THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH OUR EDUCATION

1. That can now be seen from its effects.

We can see the general effects of our system of education on the masses. As one views the movement of civilized mankind in the mass, one is forced to the conclusion that something has gone wrong. We have had now fifty years of popular education, and it is not reactionaries only who have their doubts about it. It has made it possible for every one at least to read; but it has not given the people any test or taste for truth; so that we are at the mercy of what we read, and masses of people can be hypnotized, their thinking regimented and drilled, and the character of a whole nation subtly changed by experts in printed suggestion.

If we were really educated, our Press could not dictate to us and impose upon us as it does. Our instinct for truth would be too sharp for the obvious devices of modern newspaper propaganda; our suspicions would be aroused by the very style in which it is written, and good taste would prevent us reading it at all. We have destroyed the natural instincts of the people which protect and guide the ignorant, and we have not created a real intellectualism to take their place, but only a mental pride which is precluded from understanding anything, and which provides an easy prey for the tempter and the charlatan. In addition to this question of undiscerning reading there is the question of expression. We seem to have almost killed the sense of the beautiful and the dramatic. Our clothes, our buildings and our house decorations reveal that the once extraordinary sense of beauty possessed by the peasantry has been destroyed. We no longer express ourselves in beautiful ways. We have abandoned processions, festivals and religious ceremonies; we have now only mobs, so easily drawn together by the most trivial things, our pathetic, dismal processions organized generally only to protest, and so rarely to affirm; and without power to impress the careless or strike terror among the hostile; with no idea of how to use a symbol or carry a banner. All love of colour and natural gaiety of manner seem to have been educated out of the people.

You see it even more in educated people. What one misses most in persons who have been expensively educated is leadership in moral progress. For many education now means little more than specialized knowl-

edge on one particular subject, which seems to make them constitutionally incapacitated for forming an opinion on any other subject, and it is a little questionable whether it really enables them to understand their own. It is among people who have had a generous education that one often finds the most ungenerous opinions about life and the narrowest of class judgments. This is a controversial point, and, of course, it may be that it is from these educated classes that we get a very proper resistance to the crude notions that are thrown up from the lower ranks on such difficult subjects as economics and social government. But the difficulty in believing that is that these so-called crude notions came originally at least from educated people, and that what the critics of them propose as a substitute is often nothing but the maintenance of the system under which we live, which is killing the soul of honour and truth in all classes. But it is the lack of moral leadership which is so conspicuous. We have a few intellectuals who delight us with their criticisms and biting, brilliant sayings, but they carry no banner around which people can rally. They do not have the power of action in themselves or the ability to inspire action in others.

And that we are not indulging in merely captious or petulant criticism may be seen from the fact that under the modern system of education the mind itself is breaking down. The emergence of these nervous cases which are the despair of medical science, cases which are really mental, and not simply diseases of the brain, indicates that our whole system of mental life is wrong. These modern mental troubles might be traced to the

overpressure of life, the pushing of the passion for work, this new slavery, to a point where we can no longer endure it; to the sort of "jazz" existence which comes from the multiplication of communication without the extension of time, so that the mind is distracted by calls in every direction. But from the very cures which are being tried in these cases it is obvious that we must look somewhat deeper than to external pressure. We have to look to the general decline of faith in a Personal God who cares for each one of us; to the stamping out of expressional religion even when inner religion remains; and especially to our education, which teaches us everything save how to use and control our minds. These pitiful cases of breakdown can be traced to conscience taking revenge upon us after years of repression, to the demand for a fundamental and final religion which we have lost even our sense of need for, to the inability of our self-contained and purely psychological methods to defend the mind from the invasion of phobias of the most ridiculous and childish types.

2. What, then, is wrong with our education?

It is fundamentally irreligious. We have heard a great deal about secular *versus* religious education, and in this country that quarrel is due to the fact that the Church started what education there was before the State, and that has left us quarrels about precedence; but also, of course, to our inability to agree to any kind of religious instruction other than that which is of the same character as the rest of our education: the mere cramming of information. But this does not mean that the solution lies with any of the parties to

our quarrel. The secularist may desire that education should rest upon some basis which may have much more of the religious spirit than that advocated by the ecclesiastics, who may only want to impart information about dogmas and rites, often enough quite without any new attitude to life or expression in character. What we have to recognize first of all is that we dare not educate any one at all until we are sure that it is worth while, until we are sure that there is a fundamental truth about life and what it is, and above all until we approach the whole business with reverence because we are dealing with human personalities who have ultimate rights and with social alternatives which may emancipate mankind or bring the race to a miserable end.

In the higher forms of education there is an extraordinary absence of idealism as a result. We have become so afraid of the emotions that we simply leave them to themselves, and even repress them, not recognizing that emotion is the first kind of motion and thereby destroying the chief motive to action and the ability to exert power. What is needed is the education of the emotions by giving them right expression and gearing them on to a right ideal. The repression of the great emotions by education in reserve is one of the causes of the nervous breakdowns which are threatening us all to-day. The emotions of sex, and pride, and fear, and patriotism have to be recognized as present in us all, operating secretly when we think we have repressed them; they have to be harmonized so that the self-regarding and the other regarding instincts can be brought together, while those which are

destructive of self or society must be sublimated by transforming them into other forms of expression. In addition, just at present we are suffering from exhausted idealism. Idealism has been harnessed on to the emotions of fear and hate, impressed into the business of slaughtering and maiming our fellows, with the result that many people will now have nothing to do with idealism because they are disillusioned. Neurasthenia, which is now so prevalent a disease, is said to be due to repressed inner conflict between instinct and conscience, and our generation is tired and apathetic because it has repressed conscience on the subject of war, which every one really knows to be hopelessly unchristian, inhuman and futile.

Our education is one-sided. It aims too much at imparting information, generally of a salary-earning value, or, at the best, of satisfying mere curiosity, forgetting the education of character and overlooking the necessity for securing that expression shall keep pace with knowledge. To educate the intellect only, without teaching us the nature of intellect or how to control the mind, is dangerous both to reverence and to sanity. The absence from much education of any sufficient technical or artistic expression, save as mere play or diversion, tends to make the mind revolve round itself to no purpose. It would be a great advance if we were all taught more from the concrete, if we were encouraged to express ourselves in some form of art, if we all learned a trade, if we could all make something and make it thoroughly. The day will perhaps come when we must all belong to a trade guild, if we are to attain the rights of citizenship; and

it would make not only for fellowship but also for mental freshness if we had all served apprenticeship to some handicraft.

THE ONLY CURE FOR WRONG EDUCATION IS
RE-EDUCATION

1. But that entails going very far back.

We have to be educated over again in the simplest things. It is interesting to observe the kind of therapeutics prescribed for nervous cases. They are taken right back to the primitive physical things, like the use of their limbs and the registration of their sensations. This is partly only a device for getting the mind away from itself, breaking its squirrel-cage captivity, de-hypnotizing it of its baseless fears. But it has a deeper value than that; it is really a process of re-education. Patients have to learn afresh how to breathe, how to see, how to hear, how to walk, and even how to rest in bed. The difficulty in controlling the mind and in directing the will have to be overcome by what are nothing but kindergarten methods. This is simply going back to childhood and learning all over again. Such exercises are of increased value when they are accompanied by psychic suggestion: getting at the soul through the body, which is sometimes the only way to reach it after long neglect has taken place; and they would probably be still more effective if they were accompanied with religious devotion.

We have to be educated in asking primary questions. The great end of all education is wisdom or philosophy. This does not mean memorizing philosophical

systems, trying to understand the solutions philosophers propose, least of all learning their deplorable phraseology. But it does mean getting the philosophic type of mind, the mind which asks root questions, the mind which knows its limitations, the mind which knows some questions cannot be answered because they never ought to be asked. What is always wrong with scepticism is not that it inquires, but that it never inquires deeply enough. If only people would face the ultimate questions, whether or not there is a God, or the soul is a reality and there is an immortal destiny for men, we should have fewer quarrels about things that matter less. It is the stopping short at all sorts of thoughts and systems which are accepted without inquiry; especially the acceptance of our own preferences as if they were principles; the acceptance of facts without evidence, or the refusal of them when the evidence is good, because the nature of evidence has never been itself investigated; the acceptance of some systems on personal authority and the refusal of others which rest on a much wider basis, because the nature of authority has never been analysed; it is these things which create our modern confusion. If people were profoundly instead of superficially sceptical, they would end up in the Catholic faith at last. The issues would be clear: Christianity, and in its entirety, or a negation which the human mind cannot conceive.

Especially we have to learn to go back and express ourselves. And here we have to begin at the beginning. Our generation has had one very praiseworthy desire in religion. It has wanted to express the great realities of God and of the Christian faith in actual

life. It has really determined to bring practice up to the level of confession. But it has foolishly thought that the best way to effect this was to strip off any merely symbolic expression, so that the religious impulse should pour itself directly into life. But this has not only made it impossible to speak about religion at all, since even the inner motives and convictions had to be kept concealed, but it has led to the loss of religion even in its inner reality. The only expression of this entirely immanent religion to which this generation has been able to point has been in nations rushing to destroy one another; that is the one great symbol we have evolved: slaughter. We shall have to go back and make the childish discovery that we need symbolic expression as a preparation for other expression. People who pour their religious enthusiasm into art, or music, or devotion will almost certainly, when the great occasion comes, know how to confess their religion with beauty, with dramatic appeal, and with effect on the physical world. We no longer rise to the great acts and gestures of the saints, because we have abandoned the sensible expression of religion on these lower levels. We must go back and begin as children again.

2. It might be helpful to enumerate some of these helps to re-education.

In private devotion it is very useful to associate with one's most intimate prayer-life certain simple things which sanctify our senses by giving them their part in worship and serve to remind the soul of its religious duties. Nearly all people have the inclination to use some posture in their religion. We still most

of us pray on our knees: we ought sometimes to want to pray on our faces. But there are other bodily things which we can do. We can use the sign of the cross, we can know when to bow the head and when to bend the knee, and how to use the physical act as an expression and reminder of humility. The use of deep silence combined with something to look at is a great help; prayer before the crucifix does keep the mind steady upon our great sins and God's still greater love; and those who have prayed much before the Blessed Sacrament will know what prayer is and what It is. But all prayer should be begun and ended with stillness of body and thought. And in order to get quietness as well as silence it is a help to listen for a moment to some regular sound or to your own breathing; and as soon as this has the effect of quieting the mind and taking it away from itself, transferring it quietly and quickly to God. If you can pray in church, where there is something of rich association to look at, you can frequently recall the mind without making a straining effort.

From this you may go on to the training of the mind in control. There is the habit of meditation, or what is sometimes called contemplation: visualizing scenes in the Gospels, painting the pictures even in detail. This is not only a restful exercise, but it is a real artistic expression which greatly increases the powers and the joys of the mind. From this it is easy to go on to something more difficult: to recollection, to a continual recalling of the mind to its deepest inward life—that is, to the life of the Spirit within the soul. The hardest exercise is perhaps introversion: the process

by which we move back from our own feelings and thoughts and activities to the reality and source and ground of our being in God. This makes the consciousness of God the dominant consciousness; this entails that any thought will bring up the thought of God, even thoughts of anxiety or thoughts that must be repelled; and when the time of temptation, or trouble, or demand arises, then one will act truly and rightly by instinct. It is also an important and healthy practice to incorporate resolutions in our prayers. It is best to resolve upon some act which arises naturally out of one's meditation or other form of devotion, and which is to be done that same day. It does not matter how small and slight a thing it is. It should be carefully determined upon and solemnly resolved before God. This, continually practised, will tend to link together the affective and the active life, and will be preparing us for some great action one day, in which the whole of our inner religious life may express itself and seal the soul for ever.

But all these outward forms and exercises have but one object: the re-education of personality by communion with Christ, the noblest Personality the world has ever seen, the express image of the Divine Personality, the Personality in the likeness of which our own was made, and by restoration to whose likeness it alone will find harmony, power and peace. This communion is granted us through the revelation of His mind in the Gospels, which are to be studied until they become the very principle of our lives; through the Holy Communion, in which there is to be sought continually the gift of His grace; through the personal

revelation of Christ to the soul, the crowning proof of His love, and the heart of the Christian religion. This is what takes us out of ourselves, and yet not to nothingness and unconsciousness, but to the greatest Self and the supreme Personality. This is what restores balance and strength to the mind, giving to it the calm of infinity, providing the intellect with the only solution to existence, moving the will by the greatest of all affections, the love of and the love for Jesus.

VI

THE NECESSITY OF CONFESSION

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—
1 JOHN i. 9.

A careful observer of the thought of our times must notice how much both in speculation and practice tends to the re-establishment of Catholicism. The abandonment of materialism and the discrediting of idealism have made way for the revival of realism, which has always been the foundation of Catholic philosophy. In the realm of physical science conceptions of the universe are now claiming acceptance which leave room for freedom and actual creation, so that miracles are no longer regarded as impossible; and to take a most crucial instance, whether or not transubstantiation actually takes place and only under certain specified conditions, it is no longer unthinkable; for the further extension of the atomic theory of matter by the discovery of its electric constitution shows that there is a difference between the underlying reality of matter and its manifestation, and that even the most elemental things can be transmuted. Even in socialistic theory, which has seemed most independent of and opposed to Catholic faith, we now have the emergence of Guild Socialism, which is largely the mediæval Guild system, which was created, guided and inspired by Catholic faith. All that is wanted to complete the collapse of the secular scheme which threatened to

conquer the nineteenth century is a change in the study of history and the conclusions to be drawn from it; and already a few straws on the stream predict a turn of the tide: Christianity is seen by Mr. Wells, even in his purely humanitarian outline, to be the great turning-point in history and the test-stone of all succeeding ages. It will not be long before we get to the Catholic interpretation of Christianity as alone adequate, and before we see that we must have a Catholic Church.

But perhaps one of the most impressive rehabilitations of Catholic practice has come from the medical profession in their practice of psychical diagnosis. When one remembers that it was only in 1904 that Sir Oliver Lodge made the oft-quoted statement that, "As a matter of fact, the higher man of to-day is not worrying about his sins at all, still less about their punishment," and considers his reply to criticism in which he explains that he did not mean that men do not believe themselves sinners, but that they think it is better than brooding over their sins and lamenting them to work hard at something good, one recognizes how thought can change in a decade: for that statement looks utterly foolish in the light of what we are learning through psycho-analysis.

It has been over the confessional that some of the greatest opposition to Catholic practice has arisen, and now we have our medical men forced to adopt similar methods and insisting that confession is necessary, and, indeed, declaring that if this method had been known and practised many of the inmates of our asylums need never have gone there. What helped

the revolt against the confessional was its alleged concentration upon sexual sins, and the discovery of a few questions which a priest might ask on this subject was sufficient to rouse a storm of indignation. Such questions can be found discussed in all confessors' manuals; but they have no undue prominence, and the questions are only to be asked in cases where certain information has already been volunteered. But why is there no outcry against the matter which occupies pages in books of psycho-analysis and the tracing of practically nearly all our mental disturbances to sexual roots? Certainly no confessional manual has ever approached these in their sickening details and in suspicion of sex as the root of all evils.

All this is not to argue that we simply retreat from the position taken up by Protestantism or to claim that mediæval Catholicism is being proved to have been right in all its details. But, leaving aside abuses and false emphasis, what is being shown on every hand is that the Church was instinctively right, through and through, and that it only needs the union of its instinct with scientific knowledge to make the Catholic faith the only philosophy of a reasonable creature and its practices the health and security of the soul.

It is to this particular point that attention is now called, and the question needs to be asked,

WHY IS CONFESSION NECESSARY?

I. It is necessary from psychological considerations.

Psycho-analysis has a general theory somewhat as

follows: We are born with certain impulses in us which, if they were given full play, would make us terrors to society, without the slightest regard for decency, the rights of others or the security of morals. The time comes when the pressure of society against our animal and savage ethics begets in us a response, and there arises in us, somewhere about five years of age, what is called the "censor," which is an individual judgment largely in agreement with social opinion. In the light of its attitude we become aware that many things we have done and desired are filthy and shameful, and an endeavour is now made to repress them. But in a great many people these efforts take the form of pretending that we have never had any such inclinations or practices; the thing is put out of mind, as we say, but that is a very inapt description of what happens; for the conflict between what we are and what we feel we ought to be is simply forced underground, where it starts working out all kinds of troubles. These emerge into the conscious life in disguised forms, sometimes as dreams which have an obvious interpretation, sometimes in strange obsessions, fears, moods, and in worse cases in mental derangements and physical infirmities.

The first thing that has to be done is to get down to the real source of the trouble, and this is done by various methods of getting the mind to betray its concealed material and yield up its buried troubles. Any idea that the best cure for these things is to plunge into some obliterating activity is fatal; indeed, one of the symptoms which the psycho-analyst is quick to notice is any unusual activity, especially where it is

spent on rather stupid and trifling things; for that is one of the ways in which we show that we are trying to shut out of mind some unpleasant consciousness and to shirk some great battle. I wonder how long it will be before some one points out that a good deal of the tremendous activity of civilization, which is so much praised, is nothing but what might be called a racial neurosis. If some detached observer of our world could analyse our ant-like activities, he would know in a moment that these people were not working because they liked work, or because they had a particular purpose in view, but solely in order to drown their conscience. Now, the most curious thing is that once you can get the patient to see what it is that is hidden in him, all the trouble it has caused will vanish. The root troubles are, in the judgment of some great analysts, sexual, and not at all of a healthy or normal kind, but perversions, so that what is the matter with a great many of us is that we have not been able to gratify the most hideous and bestial desires. We have an impulse to say that these psycho-analysts are themselves obsessed; and they have certainly given disproportionate attention to the sexual factors; but they can bring, unfortunately, only too great evidence in proof, and they hang over the heads of many of us the possibility that we shall soon manifest some of these alarming symptoms, and find ourselves going through all the misery of the new confessional.

Some knowledge of all this is very useful to any one who desires to keep his hidden life clear and clean, and to fortify himself against those strange attacks of nervous decontrol which are the marks of our age.

The origin of worries, inability to face issues, restless, unsatisfied cravings, goes down to some such cause. It is a most humiliating thing to discover that a great many of these troubles are due to repressed and perverted sexual emotion, which we are bound to be ashamed of; but it is good for us to find that the filthiness which we so condemn in others, who have managed to repudiate the inner censor altogether, may have its seeds in ourselves. It does not make us foolishly lenient, but it does make us look round to discover what is the cure for these things—for if we cannot cure them they will ruin us—and in that search we all have a common interest. It is a disturbing self-disclosure; but, like all knowledge, it must be faced, and it will be found safer than remaining in ignorance. It helps us also to see where many things are leading which we do not recognize in their initial state. To take one instance: a good many of us feel that modern dress is becoming very immodest, and although we find use soon blunts the shock and we cannot see any real reason against it, a new consideration is necessary when you discover that little children have a great passion to display themselves, and that when this is repressed as they get older it betrays itself in different ways. The analysts call this "exhibitionism." It is a name worth remembering. This is a somewhat unpleasant example, but it will stick in the memory, and perhaps discourage us from yielding to a prevailing tendency.

But the great thing brought out by psycho-analysis is that mere repression is perfectly useless; I suppose that is why the harlots go into the kingdom of heaven

before Pharisees. It is strange, however, in this rebellious age, that no one has suggested an easy way of getting rid of all our troubles by simply ignoring the "censor." Analysts regard that as quite impossible. Their cure is neither repression—for they demand confession, the admission to oneself that things are so—nor displacement, the crushing out this thing by some interest of a quite different nature, but by its sublimation, the giving of real expression to this instinct in healthy ways, and for this they recommend family life, and where that cannot be, then politics, art and, supremely, religion: the concern for one's fellows, the expression of beauty, and the love of God. No one can fail to see how at many points this confirms the old Catholic faith and method. It shows that there is a universal need for a cleansing of our nature, and that for this confession and conversion are necessary.

2. From the spiritual side confession is even more necessary.

One of the first things religion demands is sincerity, not only the shaping of external conduct but the purity of the inner life, of our thoughts and desires; and in order to take the first step towards sincerity we must welcome self-knowledge. It is an astonishing thing that an age which professed to be passionately scientific, to welcome facts though the heavens fell, was very averse to self-examination and introspection. The discoveries one made, for instance, if one really questioned oneself whether one was truthful, brave, unselfish or loving, were so disconcerting and humiliating that it was thought best not to probe too deeply; it was called morbid, and led only to despair and the

loss of self-respect. Such an attitude could only be justified if man is an enclosed, unredeemable entity, if there is no cleansing in religion. For the concealing of ourselves from ourselves, because, maybe, of unpleasant consequences, is surely hardly to be distinguished as brave or scientific. Our writer deals with this very sternly. He declares that the person who says he has no sin deceives himself, and thus obliterates within himself the standard of truth. Such an attitude is sin against the Holy Ghost: it is the destruction within ourselves of the very fountain of light. But it is not enough to acknowledge that there is sin in us; it must be confessed. It should be noticed that it is sin in the abstract that is acknowledged, but it is sins in the concrete that are to be confessed: "If we say we have no *sin*"; "if we confess our *sins*."

It is perhaps necessary to remind ourselves that the word "confess" means more than "acknowledge to ourselves"; it means to make known to others, and Westcott says that it means making known to men. Certainly, elsewhere we have the injunction "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed"; and that is a counsel which psycho-analysis would certainly acknowledge as therapeutic. It is a duty to ourselves to acknowledge our sins; it is a duty to our fellows to confess our faults to them. The question is whether this means that we are to reveal to others the actual state of our hearts which self-exploration has revealed, or whether it is only our sins against them which we are to mention. It would be something to get as far as this. What a tremendously different world this would be if only we

would acknowledge to others when we had been wrong, if the habit of apologizing were more frequent and generous! Nothing creates such a spirit of trust and respect as when a man humbles himself to say "I did wrong." If we could do this, we should halve our marriage troubles, we should dispense with the majority of our legal fights; there would be a diminution of industrial strife, and it is difficult to imagine how nations could ever go to war again. If the person who thinks himself superior would only recognize that the great sign of superiority is to make the first step towards reconciliation in acknowledging what was wrong in his attitude! One word like this and the other party will often then pour out the frankest avowal of his part in the quarrel. If, however, we maintain that we ought not to tell of our secret faults, which only offend God—and no doubt that should only be done on occasion, because of the scandal and the weakening of others' faith that might follow—I wonder why we do not carry out this principle so as also never to boast of our secret virtues, which have to be advertised, because otherwise they would never be known. Why must we let it leak out that we give away so much money, we work so hard, we spend so much time in prayer, and yet say nothing about our failures and deficiencies? Is that being fair to ourselves or to others?

Now, it is expressly stated that when we come to deal with God there must be open acknowledgement of our sin as done against Him. All God wants is this: this, with sorrow that it should be so; and then there is given to us, not in mercy and pity, but in faith-

fulness and justice, forgiveness and cleansing. There are certain difficulties here which some have felt, but which cannot be removed without assuming a certain philosophy of man's exact position of dependence upon God; that, I believe, is such as reason would eventually acknowledge to be the only true philosophy, and it demands just what is here demanded on both sides. But we are here concerned with the practical issue, and we must therefore be content with the statement that it is inconceivable how we should ever be conscious of sin, unless there is some standard which must ultimately be higher than our own conscience or the conscience of society; and it is therefore against this standard that we have sinned; sin against ourselves and sin against our neighbour is ultimately sin against God. And if there should be any feeling of resentment still left, it is surely dissipated by the very generous way in which confession is here met. It needs only confession, and God then forgives us and cleanses us; declares His faithfulness in maintaining Himself as our inner standard, and cleanses us by shedding His blood in the strife within us. Without this, all that God could and would do is useless; our confession opens our eyes to our need and makes a way for the operation of God's cleansing presence.

But these general principles demand some direction for their embodiment in practice.

HOW IS CONFESSION TO BE MADE

1. There must be definite acknowledgment.

Nothing is more difficult than to train the mind in

the habits of definite devotion, and it shirks and jibs against anything like prolonged examination and detailed confession. But this much at least must be attempted: there must be self-admission. Our nature tries to wriggle out of responsibility and excuse itself, but persistence must be made, for the sake of honesty and mental balance, until we see things for what they are, give them their name, and accept responsibility for them.

Self-examination ought to be made, however swiftly, every night before we go to sleep. It may be enough to be still for a minute and let the mind explore itself for any wounding which remains from the commerce and conversation of the day. It will be found that the conscience generally has something to report. But this will give only the positive acts of transgression; it is just as important to discover the negative failures, and for this purpose you want a standard of beauty, strength and sacrifice. For this purpose it is very useful to have a list of things both negative and positive by which to examine oneself, a list of virtues and graces, especially those praised or displayed by Christ.

It is hardly necessary to testify what a benefit all this is. It will often secure you a good night's rest, and be an antidote against dreams and disturbances. But what it chiefly does is to dissociate the conscience and will from acquiescence in things we know to be wrong, and to make a break in the stream of influence which during the hours of sleep will be operating to fix the character. To go to sleep on a fault is to let it be absorbed into the character. How our friends would welcome the effects upon us, the humility, sym-

pathy and understanding it would give us! And if one only cared to press it to a crisis, what a discovery it would make of the majesty and glory of God! For it is by the light which He lends us that we are able to see ourselves; the more we are willing to see ourselves as we are, the higher we must turn up the light. It is the one sure way to saintliness, to peace of mind, and to fruitful friendship with men.

2. The difficulty is in the form of public acknowledgment.

In the early days of the Church, penance was an open confession and an open reconciliation. But as the Church grew in numbers and the general public came in, this was found to be inconvenient and ineffectual. Gradually there grew up the practice of private confession to a priest and the whole institution of the confessional. It is against this that there has been so much accusation and such objection from the standpoint of evangelical religion. The objections from the standpoint of evangelical religion are not valid, for that does recommend some form of confession to man; what can be questioned is whether it ought to be made to some person set aside for this purpose. That is objectionable only if the setting aside obscures the fact that the priest is the representative of the Church, and discharges a corporate function not only in hearing confession but in giving absolution. But it gives such awful power into the hands of a man; it has been proved dangerous to morals; and it has produced the unlovely literature of casuistry! The answer to this is that man has awful power in his hands anyway; God will not take it away, Christ confirmed it, and the only

thing to do is to secure its right exercise. Concerning a great deal that is said against the confessional there can be no real knowledge and no proper reply. Those who know least say most, and those who know anything say nothing. A confessional of some sort there will always be. There will always be some souls who feel they must tell their story, and there are some people to whom one naturally turns to tell the story. There can be few ministers who have not heard confessions and few genuine Christians who have not been made the recipient of guilty secrets; and for that free confessional and spiritual attraction there must always be room. But against the trained, responsible confessor nothing can be said, any more than against the trained medical man. Nothing can be urged against the priestly confessional that cannot be urged against the psycho-analyst. The psycho-analyst will sometimes confess to his lack of being able to say the genuine word of absolution, the authoritative declaration that the power of the past is broken. It needs some very strong word which the patient can rely on to make him believe this; and that ultimately must derive from Christ and His Church. What is wanted is very careful training and very careful licensing. But there is such a thing as moral theology, and although it has much to learn from recent psychology, and especially from psycho-analysis, it is not immodest to claim that psycho-analysis has also a good deal to learn from moral theology—some quite simple things which it would be dangerous to forget. It ought also to be more widely known that the Sacrament of Penance is practically self-administered, since without full con-

fession and true contrition the absolution is entirely invalid.

Experience shows that there is no adequate substitute. I conducted what was largely a confessional column in a religious newspaper for three and a half years. It had very great advantages in that the penitent and the confessor never met; if the seal was broken, it was with the penitent's permission, and the recital of his sins and the remedy prescribed were doubtless a help to others. But when I think of the power it gave to an untried man, I blush for my own temerity and impudence. But the experience gathered from about three thousand cases converted me to the Catholic faith as absolutely essential to any knowledge, guidance or authority, and led me to abandon the correspondence method as inferior to the Catholic practice. When it comes to comparing the "free" with the regular confessional, experience again confirms the practice of the Church. In the free confessional one never gets so soon down to the real causes of the trouble. There is a different feeling on the part of the penitent, who tries to be interesting and who can rarely be brief, and there is absence of the solemnity of two people together in the acknowledged presence of God, who is the Judge of both, which makes for sincerity and the preservation of the seal. In regular confession one gets over the ground so much quicker and keeps track of progress and failure. Many who use the confessional would testify that hardly anywhere else does one feel the reality of religion, the awfulness of spiritual things, and the presence of God nearer and more forgiving; that the general necessity is not for more

probing but for comforting, and not for informing the conscience but for quietening it against scruples; that sexual matters do not bulk at all largely, and when they do, they are got over quickly and naturally, as nowhere else; while the effect upon the priest is certainly no more polluting than reading newspapers; and all confessions of sin must remind him of his own sins and the grace he needs to avoid others.

What is to be recommended to individuals, ministers or people? I think it must be left to individual conscience, and be no more enforced than any other sacrament; but the individual conscience will naturally consider the testimony of centuries of practice, and now the confirmation of modern psychology. The general conclusion is that it is salutary for most and absolutely necessary for some; and just as we all join in the general confession for the sake of the sinners who may be present, so this is a case where one has to do things for the sake of the whole body, and so that others should not be made to look peculiar. And if there are still conscientious objections, or apprehensive fears, or lack of understanding, then at least there must be some substitute found, and of equal difficulty and efficiency. One must be hard with oneself. One must have spiritual medicinal books to stir one up and test one's state; one had better make close friends of candid and critical persons, and one must find some form of open confessional to a number of people. Above all, one must keep oneself near and naked to God, and to that in God which is searching and stern; one must know Him as Judge as well as Father, and worship Him as Light as well as Love.

VII

THE REVIVAL OF CATHOLICISM

“And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.”—ISAIAH lxi. 4.

Away down in the West of England, on the borders of Dartmoor, the traveller will come upon a mighty church abuilding; no unusual occurrence, save that it is being built in a neighbourhood where there seem very few people needing such a building. Enquiry will reveal, however, that the church is part of a monastic settlement; that it is being built on an old and almost forgotten site of what was in pre-Reformation times one of England's greatest abbeys. The old foundations have been uncovered and are being used again; and this splendid building of pure, powerful architecture is actually being erected by the monks themselves and already is sufficiently complete for its great peal of bells once more to send their music singing through all the valleys up to the lonely moor. It is nearly four hundred years since the monastery was dissolved, the monks sent away, and the buildings levelled to the ground. And here is everything back again just as if the Middle Ages were still alive, the Reformation had never happened, and Henry the Eighth had never existed. Such a restoration wakens strange reflections; for it is a symbol and a presage. It is an outward and visible sign of the Catholic Re-

vival which is perhaps the most remarkable, because the least expected, of all the movements of this age of ours.

The nineteenth century witnessed the gradual catholicizing of the Anglican Church, and that against the general interpretation of its documents and traditions, in spite of the popular opposition to ritualism, and the efforts of prelates, secular authorities and the press to discredit it. It has been a strange movement, whose direction is even yet not determined, always struggling against the compromise of the Elizabethan settlement, sometimes degenerating into a narrow sectarianism, developing a waspish temper and producing a curious type of character, and anon flaring out in splendid challenge and producing men worthy to be classed with the saints and churchmen of former times; in one direction obscurantist, conservative and depending upon the rich, and in another serving the poor as no other Church ever has and standing out for their rights even to the point of proclaiming a revolution.

And now there has commenced a movement in Nonconformity, hardly more than a number of tiny rills breaking out here and there in a revived Church consciousness, a demand for unity, the revival of sacraments and the employment of a richer symbolic worship; not yet united in one stream, and as likely to get lost in swamps and bogs as ever to reach the open sea, and yet sometimes leaping forward and flowing deep in a fashion that might promise a more rapid change than even the Anglo-Catholic movement has effected. More than one observer has seen in the Nonconformist movement a greater significance than in any other aspect of

the Catholic Revival; for the freedom that has for so long been used mainly to get as far as possible from traditional Catholicism, because it is freedom, may return with greater ease and speed, and not only so, but may bring to Catholicism something which would almost transform its spirit and character.

Every one is bound to consider whither all this is leading. It is superficial to put it down to antiquarianism, to an endeavour to take refuge in the Middle Ages in order to escape the problems of the present, to seek shelter in merely external authority in order to find peace of mind amidst the collapse of faith and the chaos of religious thought. The movement is intensely alive to the present and is thirsting to do battle in the open with every kind of unbelief. It is futile to think that the movement can be checked by denunciations of betrayal and for illegitimate introduction of mediæval ceremonies; that can be countered by the charge of an earlier betrayal and the illegitimate destruction of what it is now proposed to reverse and restore. It cannot even be frightened by alarming references to the Scarlet Woman; the modern expositor knows full well who is the scarlet woman: the atheist and yet self-deifying State whose rise is all too likely. Nor is it quite possible to regard the movement with a generous tolerance as but one more among the amazing varieties and individualistic eccentricities of this kaleidoscopic age. It is building too much on the old foundations, it is too absolute in its claims, and has a way of suddenly attracting the least likely persons, to be regarded with any such equanimity. It is all part of a great movement, the most synthetic and reconciling movement,

of our times; and it is as such that it has to be considered. There is something in the human heart, some say it is the old Adam, and some the Spirit of God, which makes Catholicism a permanent and universal craving and fascination. On the basis of any expectation of the future, it is the one religion that can be trusted to survive and, however it changes, to remain the same. On the mere fact of the growth of the population it must beat its rival: for Catholic families tend to be larger than those of Protestants.

WHAT HAS AIDED THIS CATHOLIC REVIVAL?

1. Protestantism is being slowly discredited.

(a) This is so on religious grounds.

The Reformation has had to take up one position after another in order to resist Catholic claims; and no one of them has proved unassailable or has been able to be long defended. It set up the Bible against the old Church as a rampart against its claims and accretions: "the Bible and the Bible only is the religion of Protestants." But two questions are at once raised and still wait for an answer. Where did that Bible come from? Who selected the books and who has preserved them? For that the Protestant is dependent upon the old Church. Moreover, the moment the Bible is left to individual interpretation nothing but the wildest confusion reigns, and there is no limit to the fantastic construction that the plain man puts upon it. Or when the Protestant Churches have drawn up confessions of faith they prove to be dependent upon the credal formulations of the old Church; and

when these are then rejected and the extreme simplification made of simply believing in Christ, or in following Jesus, the question is once more started: Who is He that I should believe in Him, or what present help can He give to those who want to follow Him; and, above all, how is it that I am able to put this issue save because there has been a historic body which has kept alive the name and worship of Jesus? The final retreat has been to experience, but this has proved anything but a rock of defence; for while at first it was a man's personal experience of Christ, it has now come to be used as the argument for any and every kind of faith, or even unfaith; once the light that lighteth every man ceases to be identified with the true light which came into the world in Christ, it may lead anywhere and turn out to be nothing but a man's often quite unsanctified preferences. If it is a veritable and mystical experience of Jesus, this again is due to the knowledge of Jesus which the Church has kept alive, and it is even in the Roman Church that mystical experience is best understood and is kept faithful to the Christian type. Everywhere Protestantism is parasitic on Catholicism, and it could not exist by itself.

Similarly the working out in history of Protestant Churchmanship has been disastrous, because of its disintegrating tendencies. It has grown only by divisions, and has become the author of a welter of sects which bid fair to degenerate into every man being his own Church, while the corporate sense of Christianity is almost entirely dissipated. The scandal of sectarianism has not only embittered our relations with our fellow Christians, but it has made an attack upon the

world impossible: the differences and the dissensions of the sects is the first and finest excuse for the worldling refusing to consider Christianity. Protestantism is incurably fissiparous. And although the ridiculousness of the situation, and the practical exigencies of our condition have checked the movement and brought about a desire for reunion, it is exceedingly difficult to see on what basis union can ever be effected except on the old Catholic basis; for anything else will be but very partial union, while there is little hope of agreement upon any other basis, save in some loose and comprehensive federation which really leaves things exactly as they were save for a change in name.

And Protestantism is caught between two fires; not only the still effective volleys of the Catholic arguments, but the sniping from the ranks of unbelief, into which, by the alleged logic of Protestantism, men are continually deserting. Once the fundamental rightness of the Church is questioned, then everything comes to be questioned, and slowly but surely the way is opened either to unabashed atheism, or to pantheism, which turns out to be the same thing with a politer name. The plea for freedom from authority, from creeds, from sacraments, goes on until nothing whatever is left. Amidst all the strange erratic crossing and recrossing, from one camp to another, which is characteristic of our distressed and unguided age, there can be no doubt that Protestantism is a middle position between atheism and Catholicism, and an unstable position at that, so that the stream of movement runs either way, but here can never long remain in suspense. It is interesting to notice that the only religion

agnostics ever speak of respectfully is Catholicism, and while Catholicism loses many to Protestantism, and Protestantism to atheism, the way back generally overleaps Protestantism altogether. The preference for a vague Christianity of somewhat remote and unanalysable feelings about Jesus Christ and about everything in Christianity, which so largely distinguishes recent Protestantism, is not a position at all: it is mere residuum of something that was once there, the atmosphere and flavour of which remain, but only temporarily, for there is nothing to create them afresh.

(b) The political discrediting is more controversial, but is making itself clearer.

The outburst of the national spirit, to which the Reformation gave rise, contained great promise and inspired wonderful advance; but it had the unfortunate effect of breaking up the European family and introducing a fruitful cause of wars which have gone on reproducing themselves with more awful vigour right down to the present time, and which show no signs of exhausting themselves until the ancient home and first example of Christendom shall have disappeared. We are searching round now for some means of cementing this sundered body together with a secular League of Nations pledged against war, but this pious aspiration has to fight against the effects of the Peace of Versailles, which has reduced one part of Europe to the status of tiny Balkan states, who must quarrel and strive till they die, shut out another as inadmissible because of its revolutionary government, enslaved another, thereby producing a condition of perpetual panic and hate. Nationalism may have been a promising

stripling at the time of the Reformation, but it has now grown into a giant and an ogre.

And deeper than mere political disruption has been the opening of the way for the rise of Industrialism, with its spoliation and enslavement of the common people. The old ethic of Catholicism fostered a deep distrust of riches, actually condemned usury, and was continually seducing large numbers of earnest people to the ascetic life. The release from all this immediately brought to the world an enormous increase in capital wealth, and therefore in the power of exploration, invention, and mass production. Although the distinction is crossed by curious and illogical contradictions, in the main Catholicism tends towards the exaltation of the social unit, while Protestantism makes for individualism; and to-day we are certainly groaning under the extremes of the latter.

2. On the other hand, there has been a rehabilitation of Catholicism.

(a) This has been helped by the rise of a finer historical and social consciousness.

There is such a thing as Catholic history; and there is also such a thing as Protestant history; and often there is no more to choose between them than to say that while Catholicism may tell the truth and nothing but the truth, it does not tell the whole truth, while Protestant history does not always tell even the truth. A great deal of our prejudices imbibed from popular history are dissipated by more careful research. The careful study of the forces which led to the Reformation certainly shows what crying abuses and burdens there were in the old religion, but it does even more

to show up the evil motives and the scandalous means by which the Reformation was forced upon people by false promises and profane arguments. The Reformation period provides an unpleasant story, and historical research can only increase disrespect for the origin of Protestantism, even if it does nothing to increase respect for Catholicism. But the one fruitful line which does not leave us cynical of the whole business is to recognize that the evils of Catholicism were no necessary part of Catholic doctrine, and to recognize also that the Reformation was not motivated by diabolical inspiration, but that in indignation against abuses it allowed itself to be carried away by anger, and so parted with something which was of value and which Protestantism can never restore.

Historical studies give one a sense of the value and meaning of the past which makes impossible the idea that you can go back to some period and start all over again with any guarantee that things will develop any differently, and they show up the utter superficiality of the modern idea that we have nothing to learn from the past save how to escape it. No religion will survive to-morrow unless it has its roots in the past; that religion alone has hope of continuity which has the most continuous past. Apostolic succession is more than a merely mechanical doctrine: it is a symbol of continuity, and even as a symbol it must be preserved. Our young people studying more history feel that they cannot belong to any Church which starts at some arbitrarily chosen period, because they feel it will end as suddenly as it began; neither can they belong to a British Museum religion, which professes to bring

back some defined era as an example for our imitation; that is mere antiquarianism. They are not even content with a Christianity which began with the preaching of Jesus interpreted mainly as a differentiation from the general religious craving of mankind. They must have a religion which gathers up all the past, takes contributions from all sources, cleanses, baptizes, and sanctifies them, and then moves on, always growing to meet the developing needs of the future; and there is only one religion and only one type of Christianity that holds out any resemblances to such, and it is Catholicism.

Moreover, the new social feeling of our time must, if it is to have a religion at all, either invent a new one, which will be only a humanitarian and social pantheism, with all the dangers and deceptions that involves, or the Catholic religion which gives a sense of corporate reality, of superhuman and yet universally human provision for the lonely, orphaned soul of man. Even if one is strong enough individually to stand alone, there is still the question of one's duty and the need of pooling one's strength where it will serve others and transmit itself to the future. And this new feeling that we are members one of another, and the recognition that this must have some visible, however imperfect, expression demands a Church that is continuous with the past, and is actually, or potentially, universal. Moreover, this social sense gives quite a new meaning to many doctrines and a sanction to many practices that from the standpoint of individualistic rationalism were difficult, and seemed unnecessary. We must have a creed which contains more than

any one of us as an individual may want, and a Church which has more forms of expression than any one of us needs.

(b) The tendency of critical, philosophical, and psychological thought is in the same direction.

It was once thought that Catholicism was an invention and a corruption foisted upon the Church somewhere in the second century. Everything is now forcing the genesis of Catholicism further back. It is generally agreed now by advanced critics that Catholicism is already implied as existing, and has left its marks as existing within the New Testament. The Christian religion was in existence before a line of the New Testament was written; and it is neither a complete prescription nor description of that religion, since it leaves unnoticed many customs which were too familiar to be mentioned; but even taken by itself it is not a sanction for the Protestant reduction. Catholicism, with its insistence on the Church and with its sacramental notions, is already in existence in the writings of St. Paul, and although by the radical scholars he who was once supposed to be the champion of Protestantism is now regarded by them as the author of Catholicism, they have yet failed to account for his power to swing the Church his way without a word of objection. Back and back goes the idea of the Sacraments, the idea of the Church, until there is no accounting for them except that they were sanctioned and instituted by Christ.

Philosophy is moving the same way. The old Absolute Idealism which was once the great defence of radical Protestantism is now discredited by philosophy it-

self. The idea that whatever is must be of one kind and equally everywhere at the same time, which involved a static pantheism, has given way to personal realism, and therefore has brought back not only a personal God, but one who can relate Himself directly with such persons as we are, with all our need of a here and now and of a tangible presence. Into this new philosophy, with its demand that this world shall be given a reality alongside of and dependent upon the ministrations of the invisible world, the doctrine of the Incarnation and the Sacraments fit like parts intended for one another.

And now psychology discloses that the things in the New Testament once dismissed as impossible, because they were thought to be contrary to nature, may be only extensions of what we ourselves know of the action of mind upon matter, this time of the Creative Mind itself. Psychology shows that our religion must not only be mental, but must be also physical, and able to influence the mind through the body; that it must not only be intellectual, but symbolic of the vaster realm than the conscious intellect sways; that the mind needs the discipline which the practices of Catholic piety have long ago instinctively discovered and most sanely preserved; such as prayer, confession, self-examination, absolution and resolution.

BUT THIS CATHOLIC REVIVAL NEEDS INTELLIGENT APPRECIATION

1. The lessons of the past must be learned.

If there is a great deal in the Reformation which

is regrettable, it happened, it can never be as if it had not happened, and there were efficient causes for it. Those causes have to be taken to heart if Catholicism is ever to become safe for humanity. There was over-centralization, and insufficient liberty was given to people to mould their own worship. It is often said that Rome has tightened since the Reformation, and that more width was allowed previously; but it is just this sort of panic reaction and intransigent attitude which is unworthy of a Church. Moreover, if we allow that Christendom must have a visible centre and a temporal head, that head must rule, not as an earthly potentate, but as the Vicar of Christ—that is, as Christ Himself ruled, by love as well as by principle. There must be more welcome of new movements of the religious life so long as they do not deny the unchanging elements. There must be once and for all a repudiation of all claim to temporal power, the dropping of political intrigue, and much more care that the Spirit and spiritual needs dictate, regulate and limit external forms. There must not only be an absence of any recourse to persecution, but the dropping of anything like terrorism in the exercise of the Church's discipline and the repudiation of force of every kind. It must be clearly understood that while the Church keeps its historic forms as the core of continuity, that God may work outside these; just as our Lord chose His Apostles and yet would not prohibit the man who was casting out devils in His name, though he followed not with them. There must be a much more generous interpretation both of what it means to be saved and of what it means to be lost, and it must be made per-

fectly clear that sacraments are aids and guarantees, but not the limits of salvation; that they are to develop our life in the earthly body, but will not determine our salvation at the judgment, which will be on strictly ethical lines. There must be much more careful definition of the distinction between the Divine and the human in the matter of prayer, so that the saints do not compete with or hinder direct access to the Father through Christ. There is no need to deny for a moment the supreme place among mortals that the Virgin has, but her place is on the human side, and that is so in greater degree of all other saints. There must be a discouragement of hectic devotions which lead nowhere, and only induce a hysterical and sentimental frame of mind. Above all, the great doctrines of the Church must be brought out into the open and objection challenged. People know nothing of the philosophical majesty of Catholic doctrines and of the Catholic system as a whole, of its unassailable intellectual position, and of its tremendous inspiration for the mind. Rome especially has regarded herself too much as the mere *custodian* of doctrine and has given the impression that it can be accepted only on authority and without personal conviction. Doctrine comes to us with authority, that is, it is the authoritative teaching of the Church, and what this is needs to be known, so that the faithful laity may be delivered from the tyrannies of preachers of all kinds who are always drawing up private anathematizations of their own. It must be shown that there is nothing so liberal, so generous, so fine as Catholic doctrine rightly interpreted; that it is the inspiration and guarantee, not

only of the evangelical experience, but of all the great liberties and the hopes of man.

2. There must be a new application of Catholicism.

(a) It must be shown as vitally affecting life.

It must show its effect on art. Catholic art has come to be the most tawdry, meretricious and sentimental thing on earth. Catholicism must become again the inspiration and the guide of the arts by restoring a common worship to which the common people gladly come, and where the artist receives his creative ideas. Let faith return, and show that the Incarnation is the sanction and the theme of all art, demanding the beautifying of all life and the end of the foul and filthy regime under which we live, the uglification of life which has driven the glory of God from the world.

Catholicism must show that God likes men to play as well as work, and the whole recreative side of life must be freed from the false shame and devil enslavement into which it has fallen. This will be done, not perhaps so much by the Church reviving its own sacred drama, though that is salutary, or by organizing games, but by giving the people a view of life that will make them laugh again, and by bringing back the festival character of Sunday and the holidays in memory of the saints.

This is the best way to dispel the industrial nightmare of our times, and construct in the spirit of gaiety and fellowship a new order of society, which will overthrow this present tyranny and build the home of our liberties, the city of God.

(b) Catholicism must organize the True International.

The Catholic Church must make up its mind about war. It is perhaps too much to expect it to say dogmatically that a man must never defend himself, even as it will never say that private property is theft; but it must extend the area of the State so that fighting is within the State and therefore fratricide. This it can do if it will teach the State true methods, by exhibiting the right way of judicial procedure, that of Jesus Himself, the confronting of sinners with the Saviour, and then the word, "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more"; by becoming once again the centre of inspiration for a free industrialism, organizing the Trades Gilds and the village communes; and by the re-establishing of the monastic life in the country on an agricultural and labour basis, decentralizing these hideous cities and leaving them to rot away; above all, by taking over the judicature of international quarrels and excommunicating any nation which within the Christian pact makes war.

VIII

THE INCONSTANCY OF HUMAN GOODNESS

"Your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away."—HOSEA vi. 4.

Most of the Prophets condemn their audience out and out; they seem concerned only with the evils they discern; they are afraid to praise lest it should lead to pride; and sometimes their message strikes us as harsh and hopeless. But Hosea is distinguished from the rest of the goodly fellowship of the Prophets by his tenderer nature and his more human sympathies; and this has given him a profounder insight into the real condition of human nature. He sees what a lot of good there is in it; the weakness is in its admixture with evil, and especially in the uncertainty and evanescence of the good, which is as fickle and misleading as the morning weather.

Its inconstancy is certainly one of its outstanding characteristics of human nature. It is so easily stirred by generous emotions and attracted by high ideals; the difficulty is to secure their effectiveness and permanence. Man has good inclinations and tendencies within him that might make for righteousness, but they are so soon exhausted. He seems able to live only by some intermittent principle, and most often achieves nothing better than a continual rise and fall in his ethical life.

It is this characteristic which has produced the doc-

trines either that man has suffered some injury in his will-power, or that he has never yet risen to a position of control and gained a state of perseverance. There are devices on the market by the score for increasing his will-power; telling him how to gain the capacity for carrying out his resolutions, for realizing his ambitions, for strengthening the volitional side of his mind; and mostly they recommend auto-suggestion, the continual assuring of oneself that one can do and be what one desires. This method is supposed to influence the unconscious mind, where the fault of weak will is suspected to lie. It is nothing therefore but a defect in mechanism, which can be remedied with attention and perseverance. Doubtless the remedy would succeed were it not that the remedy itself depends upon this very defect. No doubt these various methods would be successful if people would only persevere with them; but if they had the virtue of perseverance they would not need the remedies. There is a doctrine that the human will has been entirely corrupted, so that it naturally and continually is inclined to all evil, and must await the touch of Divine power and a conversion to the love of righteousness before it can do anything that can be accounted good in the eyes of God. Although this is not Catholic Doctrine, and indeed is regarded as a Protestant and Calvinistic heresy, it has often had an effect the reverse of what might be expected, and, by throwing men in despair upon God, has wrought in them a strength of will which hardly any other form of religion has ever been able to attain. The Catholic doctrine of the Fall affirms that the real trouble is not in any injury done

to any of man's faculties, but to the deprivation of supernatural grace, which faith and works can gain and restore: a doctrine which sometimes seems to us almost too good to be true. But Augustine probably got as near as may be to the psychological truth when he discovered that it was not weakness of will which was the trouble, but a divided mind, a mind which did not wholly will nor wholly nill: a mind not made up.

These discussions are by no means idle and academic; they affect us all very vitally, and most of us have enough personal experience to enable us to discuss them with considerable authority. Who is there of us who cannot testify from our secret knowledge of ourselves to the extraordinary inconstancy which, whatever be its cause, continually betrays us? The futility of making good resolutions at the New Year has become a stock joke; and there are probably few of us over forty who have not given up the practice as useless and depressing. Yet the passing of the year and the change of the calendar still awake in us some annual concern about ourselves. The alteration of a figure at the end of the year suddenly makes us aware of the swift passage of time, and there often comes with that a desire, however feeble and passing, to do something to bring ourselves somewhat nearer to what we know we ought to be. It is, I suppose, one of the survivals from the religious practices of self-examination and resolution; but it has proved so ineffectual that we learn to drop it for the sake of our own comfort and complacency, and rarely make any effort to discover whether there is not some better method of

girding up the life with effective resolution. Though, perhaps, even those who have made more serious and sustained efforts than a hasty resolution at the dying year have made no other discovery than that there is nothing harder to do than to break bad habits and create new ones. We are inclined to sink down to a cynical acceptance of this impotence as a general condition of human nature; or to decline any attempt to regulate our life by accepting the prevalent philosophy that the ethical and religious life flourishes the more the less it is consciously directed or examined.

YET THE IMPERMANENCE OF HUMAN FIDELITY IS A CONTINUAL ANNOYANCE

I. It introduces into human life a bewildering uncertainty.

There is the inconstancy of human leadership. It is the bane of political life. Men gain a tremendous ascendancy over their fellows by giving expression to their ideals; they evoke a loyalty which is akin to worship; and then the idol crashes to the ground. The trusted leader passes over to the ranks of the enemy; or we watch him making a gradual surrender, while he tells us that no real change has taken place, although he appears to betray everything he once stood for. This causes more bitterness in our political and social strife than all the straightforward opposition which has to be encountered. We can respect our political enemies; we know where to find them; but the betrayal of our leaders is unpardonable. It is very possible, of course, that the leader has been compelled

to change his convictions under further enlightenment; and although this may cause keen disappointment, it ought not to be the case, as it so often is in our public affairs, that consistency should be valued above conscience. But frequently enough in such changes there seem to be other causes at work, and it is their activity which makes us so disappointed with human nature. The man who can be trusted when he is fighting with his back to the wall often fails us when he achieves success. Few men can stand the possession of power and the temptations of office without their character suffering. Others, again, display a gradual deterioration of their resolution simply owing to their desire to retain power and because they have to please a variety of people if they are to maintain their position. But what is more embittering is the case of those who seem to have used the loyalty of enthusiasts for certain causes only to gain a place for themselves, when they immediately turn round and deny the influences which won them their advancement. But these are only public examples of what may be observed all too frequently in human nature generally; and the issues that depend upon them only serve to point the serious hindrance to the world's progress which this weakness in human nature constitutes.

It is more private, but none the less tragic, for individuals to experience the fickleness of human love. This creates a situation of extraordinary complicity in the institution of marriage on the basis of irrevocable vows. We all know how strangely love may come and go before marriage. An unbearable desire for some creature of the opposite sex may dominate

our minds until we think and dream of nothing else, and cannot be anything but miserable unless we are with them; and then time seems blotted out, and hours of silence or of platitude, of nonsense or of reiteration of the same assurances, seem like the very bliss of eternity, an everlasting now which never palls and which we never want to end. And we know how we can pass through such experiences with a succession of people at a certain youthful stage, and straightway forget all about them when some new charmer awakens the same feelings; only sometimes the forgetfulness and further unconcern is not mutual, and some pursue their experiments towards fixity of love over a succession of wrecked lives and broken hearts. But then there comes a day when we take vows to remain faithful unto death, and seem able to expect that there will be no more of these fluctuations and transfers of feeling; only to find, perhaps, that we have a nature which demands an endless variety of such experiences, if it is to remain satisfied, and to discover that we cannot live with the creature we once thought we could not live without, and what was once affection turns to dislike and even hate. To meet this situation there is recommended the legalizing of definitely terminable marriage by consent on either side; and we shall probably come to that, so far as civil marriage is concerned; though whether it will not mean the utter disruption of the family, the destruction of society, and the abolition of morality is another question; perhaps only not of vital importance, because society seems determined to destroy itself anyhow, and by many other ways, if this one is not allowed. Meanwhile the sacra-

mental marriage which religion demands must rest on some other basis than the fickle infatuation which is so often mistaken for love, in fact, upon nothing less than the impartation of supernatural grace, if we are to keep faithful for other reasons than our own personal comfort or enjoyment. Such a marriage is a quite different thing; it is a vocation, it is undertaken in obedience to a Divine purpose, and since there is promised with it a special grace in order that it may be maintained, it can reasonably and desirably take permanent vows.

But there is the added complication that religious fidelity itself is often subject to a like fluctuation. There is no type of religion which can guarantee to keep a man faithful; there seem no human convictions, however deep and firmly based, which are not liable to change. A man may pass from Roman Catholicism to complete agnosticism, and vice versa; when it would be difficult in either case to prove that the change had anything to do with purely rational causes. If people were sincere in recording the history of their religious changes they would often have to give quite other reasons for making them than those they proffer; and it has become a favourite exercise to try to discover from the various classical apologias what it was that actually determined the change. Newman provides such an inexhaustible interest because every critic has a different theory of the actual motive of his change. But the feature of modern-day religion is more like the perpetual and kaleidoscopic movement of a circus. There is a continual procession round the inner and

outer circles of faith. There are some people who have even been in and out of Rome more than once. And every one who has had much experience in dealing with enquirers or with souls in difficulty must sometimes be saddened as he recollects those who once ran well, those who at one time showed promise of great attainment, but who soon dropped out of the race and turned aside to some quite ordinary life, content and satisfied. There comes to almost every one, somewhere about adolescence, aspirations which reach out vaguely after some great thing; but how many settle down to the most commonplace existence, or even lose interest in religion altogether.

2. We know the dangers only too well from our own fluctuating feelings.

We have had our high moments, when we saw the light, discerned the truth and vowed eternal fidelity and absolute devotion. But those moments are often superseded by a reaction, by a chill detachment, or even by disgust. At the best, such moments often remain, not as permanent impulses, but only as memories, to which we return only in fancy or to mourn over. We had a great emotion in which it was possible to vow almost everything; but we have lived to drift back again to an undirected and undedicated life, determined by outward events, swayed by the opinions of others, coerced by the constant compromises of life. Or we may still cling to the vision as something we mean to obey some day when circumstances are more propitious, when we can work ourselves up to take the final step; but we must be getting rather alarmed at the poor

prospect of realization; for all that is how long ago, and every day is taking us farther away from the possibility of making any change now.

What disconcerts us most is the impossibility of keeping our resolutions. We do have sudden awakenings. We discover that we are losing ground, that some bad habit is gaining upon us. We become aware of something which is spoiling our lives, and we determine to change it. It may be a quite small thing: procrastination of decisions or conflicts until things are decided for us; battles which are never lost only because they are never fought; a growing irritability which makes it difficult for people to live or work with us; carelessness about appointments, which is undermining our reputation for trustworthiness; slothfulness, which is stealing away our days, gradually destroying our efficiency and reducing everything to chaos around us; a constant speaking about ourselves which is making us a bore to every one. But the discovery of these things, and even a serious view of them is one thing; the mending of them is another. It is most distressing how we can come back to our work after holidays with a determination to take up or finish some piece of work, or come out of a retreat with resolutions that certain bad habits shall end, and certain good habits shall be formed; and looking back find that almost nothing has been realized of all our good intentions. We discover that to will is easy, to carry out is astonishingly difficult. To determine that we will get up five minutes earlier each morning, or that we will not refer to ourselves in conversation for a whole week, or that we will drop certain items from

our food or drink, will often suffice to reveal to us that there are some things which look perfectly simple but which are extraordinarily hard to do. And it may be something much more serious; some horrid habit, or disgusting vice, or mortal sin, and yet a hundred times we resolve with penitence and sincere intention, only to fall with the same awful regularity.

There is a general lack of sustained vitality. Even if we have secured a certain amount of emancipation and attained a certain standard of control there is a curious absence of ever-developing life about us. There is not something in us which is always urging us on and bearing us up; an insatiable appetite for more holiness, more discipline, more power. We are easily content and glad to be let alone. The infinity of development promised in our religion tires us to think of. "Does the road wind uphill all the way?" Must we be always labouring at the oars, toiling all night and mostly catching nothing, watching and striving to so little purpose, praying, but never getting away from ourselves, gazing at heights but getting no nearer to them, always reading about great experiences, but having to be content with second-hand reports and mere dreams of greatness? If we could only feel the breezes of the Spirit carrying our bark to the desired haven; if we could only see some result from our exercises; if we could only find our appetite growing after prolonged taking of tonics! It is spiritual lassitude which is so difficult to overcome; our fundamental defect is that we do not care sufficiently, and cannot work up concern even about the things that we are persuaded matter most in life. The highest

position some of us have attained is to have awakened from the unconcern in which so many others live, and yet only sufficiently to make us worried and despairing, not sufficiently to make progress. Some people have gone to sleep and are letting their boat drift down towards the rapids; we may be awake and pulling hard, but we seem to drift just the same.

WE MUST LEARN HOW TO CONSERVE AND AUGMENT OUR RELIGIOUS LIFE

I. We shall have to take the matter of resolution more seriously.

After all, it is no wonder that most resolutions are never kept. They are made hurriedly, little thought is given to them; sometimes so little that we not only forget to carry them out, we even forget that we have made them, or what they were about. We make no preparations for fulfilling them; a passing thought is deemed sufficient, a mere wish, and that perhaps not at all whole-hearted. It would not only be a miracle if such resolutions ever effected anything, it would be very bad for us, for they would really form no part of our self-determined character. We have made no survey of the ground we mean to conquer, we have not really made up our mind that we regard this project as supremely worth doing, we do not know whether we are willing to pay the price.

Resolutions need to be undertaken only after careful consideration. We ought to bring carefully before our mind what it is we wish to do, and to find out how much we wish to do it. We must come to a

clearly thought-out determination before we make any resolution; for it is not only sacrilegious to break religious vows, it is very weakening to our character. We need to bring before us the actual condition we wish to attain, to give some thought to cultivating delight in it, or if it be an evil thing to be dropped, then working up a detestation of it and a real contrition about it. If we are going to gain any good we must have a high valuation of its desirability; if we are going to cease from any sin we must have a real estimate of its heinousness. Then we need to consider what alterations this will demand in our life, and we have to decide whether they are possible and we are likely ever to observe them. We ought to enlist all practical aids to that end, if necessary destroy all means of retreat, write down what we propose, make open promise to some one, and only then resolve that it shall be.

The resolution ought to be embodied in prayer. It should be made as part of an act of special dedication, and the thing promised and vowed before God, and grace sought that the vow may be kept. If this does not take effect all at once, we should not be too discouraged, but repent, and try again; keep a daily diary, and at least try to reduce the number of times we fail over a course of weeks; give up time and thought and strength to this one thing. Probably we need to increase our general powers of resolution. We are trying to operate with a faculty which has never been much used; and therefore we should exercise the faculty apart from the particular thing to be attempted. Resolution should always form part of our devotions.

It comes best after meditation, and if geared on to the subject of meditation will tend to link together the affective and the active life. There might always be a resolution made after each communion. It does not matter how small a thing it is, so long as it is something definite, and preferably something that can be done that very day. If one's will has reached a pathological condition, it should be exercised in perfectly meaningless operations, done just because we have resolved to do them; like standing on a chair for ten minutes, or with your hands over your head, or slowly counting matches out of a box and putting them as slowly back again; anything which has no value but which you do simply because you have made up your mind to do it.

2. We must try to win the grace of perseverance.

Somewhere in this world there is a force which never grows tired. It is the miracle of the universe. It cannot be accounted for by mathematics. Think of Newton's law that a force tends to persist in a straight line. Why should it? All we know from observation shows that there can be no such force unless in the living energy of mind and spirit. There is such a force in nature, and that is why the earth goes round, the universe exists. There must be such a force in grace, or religion would have passed from this world long ago, the Church would have gone out of existence, and man would have forgotten God. That power is meant to be ours. Our Lord promised to the very fickle woman of Samaria, water which would not only quench her thirst but which would be a well of water within her springing up unto everlasting life. Eternal

life is not mere duration; it is an indestructible and inexhaustible principle. There is here a continuous stimulation, a continual renewal, a life capable of endless growth and development. This is what is promised by the religion which dares to declare itself absolute and final, simply because there is nothing final about it. There is this real, objective, supernatural grace to fall back upon. It is the grace of final perseverance, and its fount is the infinite, inexhaustible and never-tiring God.

In order to win that grace, which was once ours, we must show ourselves, not worthy of it, but sufficiently responsible so that it shall not be wrongly used: we must show ourselves in earnest in seeking it; we must be willing to pay the price it is worth; we must make the gaining of it the chief end of our life. But once we have been touched by it, although we can fall away from grace, even after reaching any point short of what is called union with God, we can rest assured that if we keep ourselves in the ways of grace, grace itself will never fail. We have only to establish continual contact. This entails three very simple things; the practice of our devotions as a dutiful habit, never to be intermitted or dropped below a certain stage; perform them as you have learned to do your eating, as a duty. Then it entails the cultivation of religious fellowship; you cannot live this life alone, and you were not intended to; you must have your faith sharpened and your emulation stimulated by others who have the same aim; you must cultivate the communion of saints on earth and in glory; and that means more than having your name registered as a member of a

Church. It means seeking genuine religious fellowship, which alone really constitutes membership of the Church. All some Church membership does, is to expose us to greater condemnation, because we have slighted our opportunity, and made superficial and nominal what was meant to be vital and real. And, finally, there must be regular communion. The Sacrament of Holy Communion is a guaranteed impartation of grace designed by our Lord to feed the life of the soul, in which for us He renews His sacrifice on Calvary in order to break a way into our hearts. That is a dreadfully necessary work; it costs Him much, and us little, save devout intention to receive what He will give. Nothing stimulates the inner life like frequent communions, properly prepared for and devoutly made.

There is a value in repeated dedication. Our wills are so unused that we can hardly tell when they move at all. Sometimes when we make an act of dedication, it seems to be unreal and the immediate results often only confirm our fears. But there is more takes place in an act of will than we know. It need not be accompanied by either emotion or knowledge; we may feel no thrill of joy, and we may have no idea what it is that we are dedicating; but the act repeated as devotion may one day have effect in some great act in which our whole life is offered up as a sacrifice; or more and more of our life may be seen to demand dedication, and thus more and more of the acreage of our personality will be brought under religious cultivation. Never fear, brave heart; it needs only the tiniest movement of the will to gear you on to the

will that moves the stars and made the world so beautiful. The hand that made all these things can make you, by the co-operation of your will, what He intended you to be, the very crown of His creation. There was grace enough to make the saints and martyrs of olden times; there is grace enough to make you a saint, if that is what you really want to be. The only thing that is not possible, is to be half a saint and half a worldling; half dedicated and half self-concerned; nothing will happen if you half will, half nill. Only make up your mind, and God will do the rest.

IX

THE QUEST FOR GOD

"Oh that I knew where I might find Him!"—JOB xxiii. 3.

Many people like Job who do not like the rest of the Bible; this because of its literary quality, its dramatic detachment, or its supposed scepticism. Yet if the author has a fine style, it is because he is passionately protesting against a false solution to the problems that perplex him; he preserves the dramatic attitude in presenting the case of his adversaries in the best possible fashion, though there can be no doubt that it is in a cry like this that his own feelings find expression; but there is nothing of scepticism in the cry. Job does not for a moment doubt that God exists: he only voices the tremendous desire that he knew where He could be found. He is not seeking a confirmation of God's existence so much as an assurance of His justice, reasonableness, and goodness; not that he really doubts that: he is confident that if he could only meet God face to face He would let him argue his case as one man with another. It is this careful discrimination of the poet's meaning which enables us to give the Book of Job its right place in Old Testament revelation. It is, of course, not an early book, as was once supposed: it belongs to one of the very latest strata of Hebrew thought, and represents a development which must have been going on alongside the growth of ritual and the ever more rigid adherence to the Law, and to-

gether with them sanctions a third attitude towards God besides that of worship and obedience, namely, that of intellectual enquiry. Nor does the emergence of this book really indicate that the chill of scepticism was descending upon Hebrew religion. It rather indicates that the Hebrew revelation was itself generating the desire for something more: the revelation of God in some more realizable form. It was the accepted belief that God could not render Himself visible because no man could see God and live: it was the proper attitude that man should not question the ways of God. But here Job boldly advances beyond that position, and states his conviction that man could bear the vision of God, and that God would permit man to argue with Him on a basis of common reason. This book is therefore beginning to voice the cry for a revelation of God which should be not merely a theophany, a manifestation of God in some visible and overwhelming glory, even though this is all the drama itself presents as its closing scene; there is a cry for something more, which, if it is not a conscious demand for an incarnation, nothing less than the Incarnation could satisfy.

This interpretation of Job's bitter cry may seem to remove him from all sympathy with modern scepticism, for the modern man has come to doubt not whether God is revealable, or whether, if revealed, He would prove to be a person with whom one could discuss as with an equal, but whether God really exists at all. And modern man has come to this position through the consideration of three sets of difficulties: whether the idea of God is not contradictory and

therefore irrational; whether the idea of God is not now unnecessary to explain the existence of the world; and whether the actual condition of the world does not preclude the existence of God, who by definition must be both perfect in character and supreme in power. These three sets of difficulties are those which have been raised by philosophy, by science, and by ethics respectively. In the opinion of many on both sides of the debate the question has never been finally settled on rational, scientific, and ethical lines, and even on the religious side many think it never can be. But, meanwhile, for our generation the issue has shifted its ground, and now the whole question is looked at from the psychological point of view. The existence of God is a question which the modern man postpones or regards as beyond our powers of discussion; what he is primarily concerned with is that the idea of God is an integral constituent of the human mind, bred there by centuries of thought, perhaps even instinctive, and, even when repressed out of consciousness, still so operative that it can go on continually creating disturbance, manifesting itself in intractable bodily and mental symptoms whose cause has hitherto been unsuspected, and a factor which no one must attempt to cut out unless he dares to precipitate an inner conflict beyond his powers to resolve. This attitude, whatever it contributes of a more serious estimate of religion, conceals a superficiality which the earnest religious person finds himself at one with the earnest sceptic in deploring; for both demand that the problem of the reality underlying the idea of God must be faced, and it can be urged that the proposal

to retain an idea alongside a conscious doubt as to its reality is nothing less than giving an invitation to insanity.

Therefore it would be a gain if we could get back to the sincerity of this book, cut beneath the merely psychological question to the question of reality, when I believe that it would be found that we were then well on the way to the only possible solution, which is to be found in the Incarnation, the consummation towards which all revelation looks, the confirmation every awakened soul demands, and the only final answer to the doubts raised by the mind of man. Therefore our religion faces fundamental doubt much more calmly than any other type of thought; because it recognizes that the raising of doubt must make men satisfied in the end with nothing less than full Christianity. But let us get back and examine the position of this questioning soul, and see what it is he is demanding.

THERE ARE QUESTIONS WHICH MIGHT BE PUT TO
SUCH A SEEKER

1. Do you not start out with the very thing you want to find?

While you profess yourself to be seeking God, you must in some sense already possess Him; for you assume that when you find Him you will know Him, which means that in some degree you know Him already. This is not only true about God; it is true about all knowledge. If man sets out to solve any question, he must admit that he is assuming that the question is soluble by him, which means that he will

know when he has reached the right solution. If the mind is going to come to any conclusion as the result of its search, it must be either that it has found a reality which corresponds to its own pre-existing conception, or that, although it could form no clear conception of what it wanted, there was a conception sufficiently definite to reject anything which did not satisfy it, or that what was found fitted in with or more perfectly reconciled everything else the mind already contained. That is to say that the mind which is setting out to find God either knows perfectly well what it is looking for, and therefore mentally already possesses it, or possesses it unconsciously, or possesses it by way of feeling a blank which God alone can fill. This is the one thing that all earnest seekers ought to consider: I know what I am looking for, and therefore something even more wonderful than my already possessing it must be admitted, namely, that in some mysterious way what I am seeking has already found me.

There is only one way of escape from the logic of this position: it is that it is possible for the mind of man to conceive something that need not exist. Indeed, it will seem at first thought as if this is not only not impossible, but is what the mind of man is constantly doing, especially since it is by first thinking of something which does not exist that we make any progress at all. But if the matter is looked at more carefully it will be seen that the answer cannot be decided quite so simply and dogmatically. It is evident that a man often thinks that certain things exist which do not; he does this when he has dreams or hallucinations; and surely also when he invents something or

creates some work of art which is no mere imitation of nature, but a real origination. But closer analysis will show that there is no real creation of anything purely original. A man can imagine that he sees snakes when there are no snakes there: but there are such things as snakes. Some travellers, apparently in the same condition, have seen unicorns or sea-serpents; but a unicorn, although an entirely fabulous beast, is simply a combination of a horse and a narwhal's horn; and the only thing that is wrong with the sea-serpent is that the creature has somehow got into its wrong element. All man's imagination, even in its wildest form, is really nothing more than a new combination of things which already exist. An artist might invent a new shade which had never been matched before either in nature or in art, but it would still be obtained by mixing well-known colours in different proportions. Therefore the idea of God must be derived from existing things, and even if it could be proved to be only a combination of incongruous notions, it would be immensely difficult to maintain that man could create an idea, not only higher than anything which existed, but even superior to his own mind. Here Catholic theology is less afraid of natural science than philosophical idealism, since it teaches that all our ideas of God have been derived from the natural universe and those sense perceptions to which science appeals as the only basis of fact. And it is no longer an objection to point out that the idea of God has gone through a process of evolution. First of all, so have all man's great ideas; secondly, not all thought of God has evolved, some is just where it was thousands of years ago: it is only

along one line that it has developed consistently and in an ever higher direction; and the fact of its evolution into greater purity only confirms that there is something real behind it, and something purer than it as yet is pure.

Therefore the first search must be within the mind of man. If the idea of God contains some things which at present cannot be reconciled, the very fact that they have been classed together in the one mind as essential shows that there is some deeper sense that they are reconcilable; and deeper than the idea there must be that which corresponds to it and has created it. To be sure of that you must dwell for long upon the thought of God, bring it out into the conscious mind, examine it, pay attention to it, question it; and enquire not only if it is a consistent idea, but if it is necessary to your love and life as well as to your thought. The initial trouble about religion is not about facts, but about noticing them; not about the ideas already present in the mind and inevitably assumed in thought, but about giving them sufficient weight and attention. If you will only think profoundly and start from the beginning, you will see that your search ends before it begins, that you set out with what you hope to find, and that what you set out with is not your own, but was imparted to you by its only sufficient cause.

But a second question can be put which is really speculative.

2. Are you not asking for something incompatible with the nature of God?

You are crying, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him." Is not the question manifestly wrong? Is there any *where* in connection with the nature of God?

If you find Him *here*, will you be able to believe that this is God, for is it not of the very nature of God to be everywhere? Are you not asking for a localization? This is a very chilling suggestion to the earnest seeker, and it is one that is often made to-day in the interests of religion itself. For God to be revealed at any one point is surely to contract His very essence, which is omnipresent. Then, again, are you not expecting some sort of visible manifestation, which is surely a derogation from the pure spirituality of God? If God were to render Himself visible, it would have to be in some form which was a condescension and therefore a diminution of Himself, something temporary and therefore a denial of His eternal nature, something merely an appearance and therefore something quite different from what He really is. All this is continually urged against Christianity in the interest of a higher and more spiritual religion. Further, it might be urged that our seeker was asking for an *individual* manifestation suited just to himself and to himself alone; for since we are all constituted so differently, we each need some different form of confirmation and consolation.

Yet there is no doubt that man does cry out for something like this. It may be objected that it is the cry for the impossible, that it is this cry which has introduced into religion all its corruptions and confusions, and is the source of all its idolatries, its limitations to tribes and nations and individual souls; but man still cries out for it. And he can justify this cry; for the denial of its possibility takes with it more than is often conceded. If God can only communicate with man by thought, then it is obvious that the existence

of a creature who is something beside thought constitutes a great problem for creation. You have denied that God could have made the world or man's body. But the objection is just as forceful against thought itself, which is a translation of reality, a diminution of God; and moreover, it is derived from sensible things. It must be that sensible things awaken thoughts beyond themselves, because God is behind all things, and created them for this very purpose. If we are not allowed to have a revelation that can be true here and now, but is also true always and everywhere, is not the everywhere-ness of God a blank and empty idea, a statement which has no meaning, since we cannot know what He is like who is everywhere? If God cannot reveal Himself to the individual, then the individual is a false creation, and the only thing to do is to cease from being individuals at all. Therefore the idea of a localized, incarnate, and individual revelation is not inconceivable from the nature of God.

These objections do, however, set forth conditions which will still have to be observed if these demands are to be satisfied. The local manifestation will have to be one that can be made anywhere. It must not be a piece of God which something else contradicts: it must be a revelation of that which is everywhere. If it has a visible form, there will still have to be spiritual perception of something which the mere external form does not reveal, but awakens in the perceiver. If there is a visitation vouchsafed specially to one person, it must still be something which is for all men, and only given at this point to make the universal recognition speedier. No personal manifestation allows me to appropriate God for myself, nor

must localization mean limitation. There is no form of incarnation which will dispense me from bringing spiritual vision to bear on the Incarnate. Indeed, there may be a sense in which an incarnation, while answering my desire to see God in my flesh, makes a greater demand for spiritual discernment than the Unincarnate; there may be something unexpected about the external appearance, something lowly, undistinguished, sorrowful, poor. If there is anything given specially to me, it must be only that I may pass it on to others and thus become of service to them: not in making them satisfied with receiving something second-hand from me, but in preparing for a similar revelation to them by awakening their desire for it.

WHAT DOES THE SATISFACTION OF THE QUEST DEMAND?

I. There must be something on the subjective side. It is inconceivable that this quest will ever reach its goal unless there is very great earnestness in its pursuit. Nothing in this world is rewarded without effort; and here no less; but that for no arbitrary or merely analogical reason, but simply because for a soul to win its way here with ease would be fatal to the enjoyment of its success. There was something in the old idea that man could not see God and live: there had to be some special preparation for the vision if it was not to prove destructive. The way in which pharisaism dogs religion, pride corrupts spirituality, what was meant for all is hoarded for oneself; these things suffice to show that only after a discipline and a novitiate can the vision be vouchsafed. It is not

so much that we cannot stand the overpowering majesty, as that we may be unready to appreciate the amazing humility. The tragedy about Christ's coming to us was that, out of love for us, He ventured all too soon, perhaps two thousand years too soon. And a revelation may condemn as well as save, may bind as well as release. Therefore personal revelation is only granted when the spirit has been purged of all other desires and ambitions and this one thing is wanted more than all; and, if needs be, in exchange for all. Only at the end of a long desperate search and in response to some despairing cry does God appear to the soul of man.

Therefore it is not surprising that man often has to pass through certain experiences before he can even feel the need of God. This is not to say that any one of these experiences is necessary in the nature of things; but they are necessary when we are already in a false condition. It ought to be enough for any one of us to have the passion for truth to lead us straight to God; the road of our own ideals ought to bring us at once to His presence; one moment of pure thought and we should be face to face; the very necessities of our social life and the conditions of our existence all press us to Him; but if we live far from one or out of true relationship with another, these things may fail of their effect. And then other forces have to work. Sometimes it is the fall into sin; that is, into some open and generally reprobated sin. It was never necessary for any man to fall into sin in order to know his need of God; for the one sin into which all have fallen is pride, which effectually hides God from

us because it hides us from ourselves. But when we have fallen into pride God has to allow us to fall into some sin which wounds pride. It is the man who has forfeited the respect of his fellows or of himself who often learns to cry out to God; which is the sole reason why the harlots and publicans go into the Kingdom of God before the merely respectable. Sometimes we have to know what loneliness means. When we are surrounded by a continual stream of people, we can interpose a perpetual distraction which keeps us from ever thinking of ourselves or discovering what our fundamental personal needs are; and half of life often consists in trying to find human substitutes for God, preferably in crowds, lest we should find through the failure of one on whom love is altogether set our most awful need of One who cannot fail or misunderstand. Sometimes we have to know our ambitions cruelly broken before we can turn to seek God; the disappointments and difficulties of life have forced more people to look for God than anything else. We are set in a world which cannot perfectly satisfy, lest we should linger on a lower stage of life for ever, mere parasites upon a changing show of things.

What is to be done with those who have had no such incentive to seek God; with the thousands who are willing to live on a second-hand religion and never experiment for themselves; to whom this cry of Job is disturbing, not because they are afraid it has no answer, but because they have never felt like that themselves? There is one thing which can wake them, and it is the invasion of doubt. If men would only face themselves with the possibility that there is no

God, and would work through all the shoddy substitutes of immanent reason, life-force, evolution, inherent necessity, social progress, and see that they are nothing but attempts to conceal the emptiness which is really there, they would wake up to determine that this question must be solved beyond further doubt. Often when I have pressed this dilemma I find I have been misunderstood; as if I had urged this in order to frighten men into accepting the idea of God on authority; on the contrary, it is to waken them to see that nothing but the most convincing revelation made to oneself as well as to others will suffice to banish the nightmare, darkness and chaos which such an alternative as the non-existence of God implies. We should all be startled into the one real quest, if we only saw what the alternative involved.

2. But it demands something objective.

We admit we have an idea of God in our minds. That idea did not originate with us; it was imparted. How it was imparted, may be a matter of dispute; whether by secret and special intuition, or by the pressure on us of the world of nature; whether originally at creation or by gradual dawning of man's mind. There is good reason to think that the idea of God is in the minds of all, but merely general, unnoticed or buried; and often only denial, opposition, or rebellion suffice to reveal its presence and activity. Savages have a pure but unused idea of God; religious folk of all but the front rank live on what they never propose to test to the uttermost. Most people are not serious about religion just because they believe God is there all the time and can be turned to if He should be wanted.

But God has done more than give us an idea: He has incarnated the very Idea of Himself. The desire for the Incarnation comes not only from love or worship; it springs from profound thought upon the things of God which recognizes that the Incarnation is implied in and demanded by thought. It was not given at once; man had to be worked up to see the necessity for it; and it was the religion which dreamed of it that progressed towards it, received it and carried the line of revelation along its true development. Once you face the awful suggestion that the whole idea of God may be in our minds without any corresponding reality and yet, as modern psychology declares, is there immovably, a confirmation of the idea is demanded, and that can be nowhere save in an incarnation. Notice that both idea and answer are needed. It would be useless for Christ to have come into a world which was not prepared with the idea of God which He was to confirm. He did not really teach anything absolutely new about God: He confirmed what the prophets had known about God from the beginning by showing it forth in His own person. When you have found the idea of God in your mind, then look at Christ. Remember they ought to agree; but do not conclude that if at first comparison they differ, this or that side is alone right; let them play upon one another until they fit in as the key to a lock and a glove to the hand.

But there is still something more needed; it is whether Christ, thus living our life long ago, can come to me now as a spirit, yet clothed with humanity. That is the great experience which confirms everything. Some have the experience of an indwelling

presence, some the conviction of an overruling providence, but nothing brings the confirmation, which sets you for ever at rest, like the personal coming of Christ to the soul. It takes many forms, occurs under different conditions: comes to some in lonely walks, to others in dreams, to others at the Sacrament; comes sometimes long sought, sometimes apparently unsought; but it is always the same Christ. If you long for this, and long for this most of all, and above all long for it, not for your own enjoyment, but for the saving of your soul for God, the perfecting of your character for man, making your service more useful for others, it shall be given you. Be assured if you already feel the need of it, it is a sign that He is drawing near. If your heart burns as this promise, it is because He has already been near unrecognized. Soon He will answer you by the declaration of Himself to your awakened spirit. And this end of the quest is not the end of life, but its beginning; not the goal where you lie down to rest, but the point where you are set free for still greater adventure. It sets you free from the paralysis of the one great problem to tackle the practical problems of life: it gives you a light which reveals your own character as needing to be remade in His likeness; it gives you the capacity, the demand, the hunger for eternal life as the only sphere which gives space for the working out of all that God means for you and for humanity. God set your feet upon the one search worth beginning, the one search which never disappoints, the one search which sets you for ever free.

X

THE FINAL HOPE FOR EVERY MAN

"Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."—
JOHN vi. 37.

This most welcome assurance to all sorts and conditions of men is embedded in one of the profoundest mystical and sacramental chapters of the Fourth Gospel. It sets forth Christ as the true bread from heaven, the food on which the soul of man must feed if he would live. No doubt Christ is here conceived not only as the historical Jesus, but as the eternal Logos, the Thought and Wisdom of God, through whom this world took its rise and who imparts something of His light to every man who is born into the world. But there is no doubt either that the Logos is completely identified with Jesus, and that the coming of the Logos in human flesh is purposely and solely designed to make it easier for men to come to Him and to believe on Him; the eternal and universal and the historical and personal are here indissolubly united. I am the true Bread, says Jesus, which came down from heaven. But it is also maintained that this manifestation of the true food of man having been made in this historical way, he who now comes to Jesus and believes on Him not only feeds, but finds that which takes away all hunger and thirst. The absolute finality of Jesus for the human soul is in this: that when he comes to Christ his desire is satisfied; to believe in Him means an end of that awful thirst of the mind

for certainty and of the heart for companionship. It cannot be decided on philosophical grounds, nor can we wait for history to vindicate, whether Christ is all that man needs; but it is the evidence of experience that he who comes to Christ finds what all men are really seeking, and he who believes on Him reaches the end of all desire: the finality of Christ rests upon His endless capacity to satisfy the whole awakened nature of man.

And then the discourse goes on to disclose the inner meaning of sacramental communion, by which it is made possible for men in all ages to come to Christ, because He has made a visible and tangible channel by which He can still come to them: this not apart from, nor exclusive of, invisible and universal spiritual communion. The high sacramental teaching of this chapter is now acknowledged by most scholars, they even admitting that it justifies the doctrine of transubstantiation; only saving themselves by doubting whether such teaching could in any wise be conceived as coming from Christ. But it is impossible to discover any other source which could have given rise to teaching of this nature; and it needs to be remembered that the sacramental channel neither limits nor exhausts the power of Jesus Christ to come to any soul of man, any more than the Incarnation destroyed the universal mission of the Logos; both are designed to make believing and coming easier.

There are many other things in this chapter so profound as to be difficult to understand and so unique as to be difficult to receive; and it is therefore welcome that in the very midst of all this ultimate revelation,

which, because it is to satisfy all men to the end of time, must contain many things which just at present you or I may not see the need for, which combines in one whole the mystical, the evangelical and the sacramental in a way very few are able to comprehend—I say it is very welcome that Jesus should here glance round to the furthest fringes of human condition and solemnly declare that whosoever comes, in whatever condition he may be, will not be cast out by Him. He has just spoken, what we should call in our sectarian manner, words that look predestinarian: “all that the Father gives me shall come to me”; as if only some actually arrive at Christ, and these by the Father’s special gift. But lest this should be misunderstood, as it very easily might be, He says, nevertheless, any one who is coming—the present tense is to be contrasted with the perfect arrival which the future tense indicates—shall not be thrown back or cast out; and this with the reiterated negative which we can only translate by “in no wise.”

THIS IS AN UNCONDITIONAL ASSURANCE ABOUT
ANY ONE

1. We can appreciate its application to picturesque sinners.

Our Lord’s attitude to the fallen and outcast has gradually made some difference to the judgment of the world. It has given us at least pity for those poor souls who have stumbled and lost not only the respect of the world, but what is far more serious, their own self-respect. Our pity for the drunkard and the

harlot, the thief and the murderer, has been tremendously increased under the moral teaching and the sublime example of the Redeemer. We all recognize to-day how much social conditions, how much the fatal combination of opportunity and passion, may explain why one man falls and another remains upright. Looking into our own hearts, whether by the aid of the moral teaching of the Gospel, or by the diagnosis known as psycho-analysis, we know that all the fatal weaknesses and unholy desires which doom others are in ourselves; and that we have no absolute guarantee that given the same circumstances we should not have acted in the same way.

But such pity, unless sublimated, leads either to a hopeless determinism in our judgments, to the idea that no man could have ever done other than he did do, when instead of the evangelical conclusion that all men are sinners, we arrive at the opposite extreme that no man is a sinner; or we come to the equally hopeless sentimentalism which mourns over a man's condition without being at all able to help him. It is when we understand the real inner condition of the outcast that we touch a deeper passion than merely sentimental pity. We see in some cases the awful bondage into which a soul can fall. Who does not know of some man of intellect and genius who has fallen under the pitiful slavery of drink, which gradually undermines his will, and at length his ability, until he wakes up to find himself bound hand and foot, and as far as this world is concerned, absolutely useless? Who has not met some person of amiable character and of fine aspirations who is unable to resist

the seductions of fleshly lust, and who at last ruins his character and sets himself on flame with desire that can never be satisfied, bringing himself literally to hell before this life ends? Such cases want more than pity, they want power to rescue them from their slavery and torment.

And there is no hope we can cling to save that here or elsewhere they may be able to come to Christ. We rejoice to know that if at the very last they turn in their despair to Him, there is one who will not only sympathize and admit them to His friendship, but one who can by that friendship set them free. They may be undesirable characters; their own friends may long ago have given them up, their own mother ceased to hope for them, but there is always Christ, and there is surely no one who is not glad of that. When earth has spurned them there is still the Friend of Sinners; when this world can do no more than pronounce judgment, there is another assize at which they will have every allowance made for them. The pity of Christ is infinite, and will have room for those whom man has even ceased to pity; the power of Christ will take up those who have been discharged by all human agency as incurable. It does not matter how degraded, how enslaved; it does not matter how long they have put off their repentance, that they have only come to Him when the pleasures of the flesh have ceased to attract and the worn out emotions can no longer enjoy the soft seductions of sensuality; though they come without a rag of moral integrity left, smelling of the swine trough and only driven home by desperate hunger, the Heart of the Universe is as open

to them as to the saint, the Holiest of All will gather them to His breast and kiss away the leprosy from the tainted lips. We want always some one to preach this; this glorious unconditional promise of Christ: for this is the heart of the Gospel.

2. But we must try to understand the application of this to contemptible sinners.

There are the careful sensualists. We all know men who have drunk enough to land some men in the gutter, but they have never been in the condition which brings public disgust, and never enslaved themselves so thoroughly that they have passed beyond recovery. A tough constitution, which seems able to stand what would kill others, a power of will which enables them always to balance themselves on the edge of the abyss, has saved them from the fate that overtakes others.

There are sensualists who manage to keep themselves out of the divorce courts, who can find delicate refinements of gratification which do not make them outwardly swinish, who have succeeded in ruining others without ever ruining themselves. It is not so easy to think that if these suddenly face death or disgrace, and turn with a cry to Christ, that He will receive them; but this we have to believe.

There are worse cases still. There are those who manage to avoid all these easy pitfalls, who are never tempted in this direction, or if they are, resist only because they know perfectly well that these sins do not pay. But they have higher means of self-gratification. They set out to gain nothing but their own ends. They make people fall in love with them, but they never fall in love with any one; so that their career is a

record of friends shown to the door and trust betrayed. They climb to great position in public life, not because they want to serve the public, but because they desire power and know how to win public applause. Such men are utterly lacking in principle, either public or private. Their word is never to be trusted; they use their brains simply to outwit their conspirators, and rejoice in doing it. They debauch public life; in a few years they will undo what it has taken generations to construct. They can destroy a nation's soul by offering it military victories or material prosperity. All honest men hate and despise them; they are held in contempt even by those who swarm around them for the favours they can dispense. But one has to remember that when such characters turn to Christ they will be received.

Imagine the most contemptible character you can. The man who is fundamentally a coward, who betrays his friends to save himself, who deserts his cause in the hour of battle. Think of the man who is utterly mean, who has never helped a soul and does not want to, who is always scheming for his own ends, who is incapable of self-sacrifice, who stands aside from life with cynical and calculating prudence, whose sole ambition is to secure for himself either physical or mental comfort, and who looks on callously at the pain of humanity and the misfortunes of other men. And then remember that Christ has a welcome for such even as He has for those who have stood alone for the sake of others, who have worn themselves out in the service of their fellows. This is getting more difficult to believe, or to understand. There have to be consid-

ered, moreover, just such cases as those who have some concern for the possible suffering of their souls, who are afraid of God or of hell, who have some of the old instincts sufficiently alive in them to try to keep on the right side of God and to keep open a way to Christ at the last; whose religion has been all along a calculation on the limits to which the mercy of God can be stretched, who have always subsisted upon a minimum which they thought would secure them some consolation and safety at the last. We have to remember that Christ's declaration guarantees them a reception at the last. Yes, it really means every one: all the skunks and shirks, all the cowards and contemptibles, all the miserable creepers and mercenary calculators, all the frightful bullies and those callous of others and careful of themselves; not only those who get to the bottom in this world, but those who get to the top, and those who carefully keep a middle course. Jesus Christ solemnly declares that He will reject no one who comes to Him.

WHAT MAKES SUCH AN ASSURANCE OF MORAL VALUE?

1. It is not the persons who may come; but the Person to whom they come.

The guarantee is of value not because of the universal nature of the welcome, but because of the universal nature of Him who welcomes them. It would be quite useless simply to invite the fallen and enslaved to Christ unless He had a friendship to offer which could remedy what had betrayed them. What has been the cause of the fall of so many has been

the lack of feeling that any one really cared what they did. Some did not understand; some had no patience; few cared right to the end; and because of this they fell, and accepted offers of friendship and cheer which were shams and deceptions. Jesus works such miracles with sinners because He offers to be unreservedly their friend, because He is supremely interested in them as they are, interested enough to die for them. Such souls often find their way more easily to Him just because their case is so sore. They only need to have Him clearly presented to them; either now or at that last hour when they shall see Him. They will fly to His arms at one look from His eyes. But what of those sinners who worm their way to the top in a corrupt world and fatten on its corruption? Suppose that one of them is suddenly nauseated by it all and turns to Christ. We want to know something more than that Christ will receive him; we want to know what Christ is who will receive him. For such there will be the sudden and blinding exposure of themselves. The scorching holiness, the intrepid courage, the glorious purity of Christ must at once strike them, shame them and encircle them. Men are going to get a vision the moment they get near Christ which will strip them bare and make them see in one flash all that they are. He will fold them to His heart right enough, but it will be a heart that blazes like the light and flame of a furnace fire. It is His capacity to bear the vision of truth down beneath all man's subterfuges that makes Him the real hope of every man. He is not only hope for all who fly to Him for pity, but hope for all who need from Him cleansing.

And what for those careful villains, who hope to find in Him some pardon at the last, those sneaking hypocrites who blubber on death-beds, those whose religion is of a piece with their whole lives, a careful keeping on the right side of any one who they think can be of any service to them? Christ has the capacity for making them ashamed, of plunging them into floods of remorse, of touching their hearts with that blood which cleanses because it brings new life. He pours into their thin blood the blood of a consuming love, He gives to their tainted blood the blood of innocence, He imparts to their degraded strain the blood of the nobility of God. From within He sets pulsing a new force, and they are like sick men who feel strength tingling again in them, to whom vitality brings purified life to palsied limbs, whose purified blood forces out all impurities to the surface.

Can we be sure that Christ will have this effect on every one who comes? Does not religion provide us with only too many examples of self-deceit, of weakness merely buttressed up and not built over again, of hypocrites sheltering under its friendship, of those who delight in its emotionalism, or its ritualism, or its external intellectualism and æstheticism; who make the whole of Christianity a mere romance, something thrilling to read about, which they never mean to be? People can do that, they may try it; but once Christ gets hold of a man at all, at last He gets hold of him altogether. Christ attracts different persons by the things they admire in His character, by the things that appeal to them, but they are never allowed to remain in this eclectic condition; for the sake of what they want they

have to take all. No one can really for long choose something in Christ and be careless of the rest. You may come through emotion, through thought, through external things that only Christ could create; but the things which draw you to Him will at last drag you to the whole. Any one who knows the inner history of souls knows this. They do come choosing, qualifying, drawn by this or that, excepting this thing or the other; but once He has really attracted them, there is no assurance that they will not waken up to their need of the whole of Him, or He will not demand the whole of them. There is the safety of it all.

But does not "coming" involve all this? Surely it means that a man must repent of his sins, that he must surrender all that he has, that he must yield himself altogether. Are not these the very conditions involved in coming? It implies motion: a man must *come*, and that means changing his position. Are there not some who only purpose to come a little way, to get near enough to Christ to be sure He is there, near enough perhaps to see Him, but not so near that they will be swept off their feet, remade in Him? Yes, maybe. Nevertheless, it says that it is him who is coming that Christ will not cast out. He will not turn a man back because he has not yet come all the way. Let a man move ever so little, so little perhaps that none but Christ would notice it; he shall not be thrown back because of that, but only lured the farther on. It hardly matters what the motive may be: fear, longing for happiness; He can afford to accept that because of something else that will be certain to develop. The Father has put in every man's heart the longing for

Christ, and that is the thing that ever moves us at all. That does not perhaps mean anything like dogmatic universalism; but it does mean everything short of that. The souls that the Father has given to Christ will come to Him, because He and they spring from the same source, and they are made in His image. And however far a man has drifted, he cannot alter the fact of the original impulse which gave him being, nor can he ever get beyond needing Christ, and, therefore, one day wanting Him. It may be that he will want other things too, and these will for ever hold him back; but that will only cause suffering. If a man can bear to suffer for ever, he may be able to keep away from Christ for ever. I do not know. It may be so. The only way in which a man can keep away from Christ is to get into hell, and I should think that was difficult, because it means to plunge oneself ever deeper into a suffering which one is willing to make eternal. The dilemma is between Christ, and therefore hungering and thirsting no more, and an eternal suffering which itself can be nothing but the hunger and thirst after Christ eternally denied.

2. But our concern in all this ought to be personal.

We have been rejoicing in the universality of Christ's promise because we can think of so many whom we wish to include within it. But should we not understand much more of what it really means, if we rejoiced in the universality of Christ's promise because we ourselves were included? We know enough of ourselves to know that out of the heart of man come all unclean things, and that we have all these inside us only waiting for a chance to come out.

The old evangelical idea that all need the same salvation, because all are equally bad, is being shown to be scientifically true. There is nothing man has done which we are not capable of. Until a man comes to that state of self-knowledge he does not come to all that he is; and it is only when he comes to himself that he comes rightly to Christ. But it is by no means through this self-knowledge that a man always comes to Christ at the first. He may come to be His servant, cheerfully professing himself able to follow Christ, gaily protesting that he is anxious to fight under His leadership. But there will come a day when he will have to come to Christ on an altogether different basis: as a hopeless sinner who has found himself a mass of unpleasant, soul-destroying sins. He will find himself full of those very things that he has most vehemently condemned in others. It is by no means the worst discovery we have to make when we find in ourselves the lusts that make the drunkard and sensualist; that is made when we find that we are calculating persons who have never really loved any one, but only loved other people's love of us. A good deal of what passes for love between people is merely a compact of selfishness; which is soon found out when the one asks more than the other is prepared to give. Few who have come to know themselves are able to be sure that there is an atom of unselfishness in them. Many have to make the discovery that they are utterly cowardly, and can see no way of ever altering their condition. Soon or late we all have to go the same way home; and it is the prodigal's way, the way of the Magdalen and the penitent thief.

Therefore most of us need this universal assurance even more because of what Christ is. It is not only that I want some one on whose breast I can lean and be at rest; but some one to lean on whose breast will set me aflame with a new secret of love, some one who at last will teach me how to love not only Him, but all mankind, and as He loves them. I want to know not only that He will receive me, although He can see that I am a coward, but also that He will be able to drive cowardice out of me at last. Some of us may come to Christ at the beginning because we want to escape the consequences of our sins, but at the last it is rather because we are in terror lest we should try. Many seek Him at first in order to hide from the truth, but at last it is to hide in Him because He is the truth. That is why we want to know that this promise is universal, so that each one of us, with all our worthlessness, shall find in Him the complete reformation of ourselves, in fact the remaking of us in His image, till we are like Him as He is. And that is why we must feed on Him, on His flesh and blood, on His humanity and His sacrifice, for that is the only food that makes us hunger no more and that the only draught that can bring our insatiable thirst to an end. And all this is for whosoever comes; however he comes; whenever he comes; when he only begins to come. For to come to Christ is to come to the Eternal Life, to touch the Fount of all cleansing, to set out upon the Infinite Way of Life.

XI

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HATE

"Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer."—I JOHN iii. 15.

The love which the New Testament is constantly praising is apt to be dismissed by the person who boasts of being moved only by realities as mere sentiment, and therefore as both dangerous and impotent. St. Paul's hymn in praise of love is acknowledged to be very beautiful, but love is there defined in such a way that we are compelled to admit that it is the rarest thing in the world; and this author seems to be under the delusion that love can be commanded. Surely these writers are living in a realm of clouds, and have failed to recognize that even the most beautiful love that we can see in this world, that existing between man and woman, or parent and child, is after all a very changeable thing, an emotion that cannot be bidden at will. We fall in love with a person in a most inexplicable way, and we are as likely to fall out of it again, as suddenly and irrationally. We conceive a tremendous craving for a person of the opposite sex, which is not entirely sexual, or it would never centre upon one person as it does to the temporary exclusion of all others; but why this suddenly comes and fastens upon one person no one knows; for it can be bidden neither to come, nor, what is more tragic, to stay. The love for one's own child is a natural emotion that has little

reason in it, for it may be that the child is neither beautiful nor interesting; and this, too, has the habit of passing into the most violent hatred if it is disappointed in any way; the hatreds which arise between children and parents is one of the commonest facts of modern life.

But these writers are not speaking of either of these kinds of love. The poverty of our own language does not enable us to distinguish what was clearly distinguished by them; the love they speak of is neither sexual nor natural affection, but is a love of the mind and of the will, and is particularly a relationship which exists between the brethren; that is, those who have the same faith and have pledged themselves to fellowship. For brother, in the New Testament, means a member of the fellowship, and has not a universal meaning. And yet that is not a limitation. It escapes the sentimentality of a mere universal feeling which cannot be real until there has taken place a change in men and their relationships; and yet it is potential for all, because they may become members of the fellowship, and indeed will have to be loved into it.

There is a deeper reason for its universality than the possible extension of the fellowship feeling. It is a supernatural love: it is the love which God has and which constitutes His very essence, a love which has been manifested in the redeeming work of Jesus Christ; and that means a love which consists in an uncaused goodwill of such intensity that it goes out to seek the good of objects who have no natural attraction, who indeed resist all advances, and, in the case

of Christ, actually murder the one who comes to offer them this love. But because this love is God's unchangeable nature, it persists in spite of, through, and beyond all these manifestations. This love is the very groundwork of the universe. We have said it is supernatural; that word has to be used not in distinction to the natural, but to the *unnatural*, which has now become second nature, in that the love of God which is the cause of all things has been perverted. Remnants of it are found in sexual and family love, but there shorn of an abiding will, becoming extraordinarily fickle and uncertain; and because of its repression coming out again in hate, making man a murderer in intention and in fact.

Therefore it will be seen that this writer is both a philosopher and a psychologist, and of a very high order. For he is both a scientific realist and a theological idealist. He is under no delusion that there is much love in the world; he knows that hate and fear, lying and murder are everywhere. At the same time, he is no pessimist, for he believes there is a power to overcome the hate in the world, and that power is the original cause of things. And although he knows that hate rules so many hearts, and often supersedes natural love and resists supernatural love, he knows too that hate is a cause of darkness in the heart and ends in murder, and, therefore, that it is doomed if man reflects and considers the consequences of hate; not that reflection will give him love instead, but it will show him the dangers of hate and will open his mind to receive the gift of God's love.

WE HAVE SUFFICIENT MATERIAL FOR STUDYING THE
SUBJECT

1. We have lived under a deluge of collective hatred.

(a) That provides the best material for its scientific study.

Modern psychology tends to turn more and more to the movements of vast crowds in order to get light upon individual mentality; for it is held that in the crowd man becomes more primitive: his unconscious mind becomes dominant through the operation of mass suggestion; and then we may discover what influences him whenever he allows his judgment to be submerged. This psychology is by no means absolute, especially when it declares that the type revealed in the crowd is the most primitive in point of time. For whatever evolution may teach, man's mind must originally go back to the very highest that his own mind reveals, and indeed to something far higher. Moreover, man will have to move again from his individual to a higher mass mind before he can get any farther in social evolution. But in the crowd, easily swayed by violent passions, we can readily discern the operation of the emotions which occasionally take charge of the individual mind; there is the same openness to suggestion, the same manifestation of animal passions, the same overthrow of all rational judgment and kindly feeling.

All during the war we saw the operation of this mass feeling against our enemies; it was not only a natural indignation against a people who precipitated war, whether by deliberate plot or through unforeseen re-

sults of a certain policy; not only motivated very largely by fear of what would happen to us if our enemies won, but also deliberately worked up for war purposes by governments and newspapers. It submerged every one to the level of the lowest. Poet, bishop, scientist, immediately began to talk like the most irresponsible and ignorant persons; there was no distinction between the opinions of the pulpit and the public-house. For the purposes of this hate, all qualifications had to be ruled out. All Germans were the same German: once a German always a German. Everything evil that the Germans did was used as propaganda; anything good that any German did was carefully concealed. In addition, many things were invented which never happened at all; like the cutting off of women's breasts and babies' hands, and the employment of the "cadaver" factory where the bodies of dead soldiers were melted down for fat. Any suggestion that we should still love our enemies was swept aside as dangerous nonsense, and any one who refused to join in the general hate was looked upon as suspect, and indeed classed with the Germans as an object of hate. Conscientious objectors were regarded as worse than Huns.

It is not surprising that this tornado of hate has left gusts drifting about still, waiting to spend themselves on some new object. When one of our brave allies forsook the cause our opinion of the whole nation altered at once: the Russians had been such splendid people before, simple-hearted, profoundly religious, brave and loyal, but when they determined to overthrow their government and have one of another

type they immediately became the worst enemies of mankind, and fear and hatred of Bolshevik Russia has almost outstripped the hatred once felt for Germany; indeed, one of our foremost politicians has been seeking to get us to contemplate the possibility that we shall have to use German help against them, and has been telling us what good qualities the Germans have for resisting this sort of barbaric savagery in which these erstwhile mystics now indulge. This hate has begun to fasten upon our own people. The bitterness with which the Irish are now regarded is an evidence of this transference; and it is interesting to notice that whereas their rebellious disposition was once said to be due to German gold, it is now traced to Bolshevik gold; so does this type of mind try to rationalize its new and shifting hates. It comes nearer home than that. When the workers of this country were fighting our battles and standing in between us and danger, there was nothing too good for them; they were heroes every man, they were to have a new voice in affairs when they returned home, they were invited to become audacious in demanding a share in the country's wealth. And now there are many who have only one cure for the miners' unrest: it is that they should all be shot. The general industrial unrest is traced not to wages at all, but to Bolshevism, and ultimately to German influence. Trade Unionism gets called Prussianism, and some of its leaders Huns.

(b) Can there be anything rational in these mass hatreds?

The hatred which was aroused by the thing Germany was supposed to stand for, and by the things

which Germany certainly did, is explicable enough. Was there not enough to raise any one's hate in the monstrous idea of its Absolutist State determining to subject others to its will and threatening to master the whole world? The modern world could not tolerate the foolery of this jackboot and goose-step philosophy in the heart of Europe. Every one suddenly saw that the thing was an anachronism, that there would be no peace for the world until it was crushed out of existence, and there must be no rest until this thing had been defeated by the only methods that it could appreciate, and itself cried out that it was worsted. There is nothing irrational about that. And the means by which Belgium was invaded, war was made from the air, passenger and even hospital ships were torpedoed, revealed a capacity for crime that made men furious with indignation. It is held that without hatred of such things this world would never progress and evil would go unchallenged and unafraid.

But there was a strange element of irrationality in all this. For it was precisely those who seemed to hold a similar sort of philosophy who seemed to be most angry with the Germans for professing it. Persons immediately began to clamour for the rights of small states who had never thought of them before; people began to murmur against militarism who had hitherto praised it; those who grew red at the thought of an Absolutist State grew even redder when any one challenged the absoluteness of our own State over his conscience and religious allegiances. All this could be set down to fear which, if it is not rational, is perfectly natural. People were so afraid of the consequences of

defeat or of invasion that they clutched at anything which explained it in terms of higher unselfishness and political concern. But the moment the danger had passed it was clear that it was not these things in themselves, but the iniquity of the Germans professing them that roused the hate. For there followed a great rise of Imperial ambition all over Europe, and treaties were drawn up and eventually arrangements sanctioned under the Peace Treaty itself which committed millions of people to domination by their hereditary enemies; and more money is now being spent on armies and navies by the Allies than before the war. In our own Empire things like Amritsar and the repression of the Irish Rebellion have been justified by the arguments which the Germans used. The objects for which the war was supported are not only forgotten and forsaken, they are openly derided; and the country is now busy erecting monuments to its gallant dead, consisting of everything save the effort to secure the things for which they died.

It is no wonder that a great wave of cynicism has spread over the world, that idealism of every kind has received a deadly blow, that religion can hardly stagger to its feet, and a dreadful apathy has settled down upon all classes of the community. It would be easy not only to despise and despair of a nature which could so cheat itself, and be so misled, but to work up a hatred of the human race as such, as a desperate and wicked species which had better be destroyed. But it is precisely this shifting of the object of hate which we have to watch. Modern psychology tells us that

this is what always happens with a repressed emotion; it will disengage itself from the original cause and even attach itself to any other object whatsoever, so long as it provides an outlet.

2. We must get to know this thing in ourselves.

(a) Who does not know something of the growth of personal hostility?

We know how it takes the most puerile form. Some one does us a wrong, often of a very slight kind, sometimes falsely suspected, and that starts to colour all our judgments of that person. It is enough for any one to disagree with some of our ideas, and we picture his whole mentality as bordering upon imbecility; enough for some person to differ from us on a point of policy, and we believe that he is spending his strength in thwarting our plans. We suspect such persons of hating us, and we find ourselves, first in our thoughts, and then openly, indulging a hatred which slanders their character and imputes evil motives. We cannot think of them without a hot feeling coming over us. If we are not careful we find ourselves wishing them ill, perhaps contemplating the fact with satisfaction that they cannot live for ever, then wishing that they were dead. The steps which lead more active natures straight on to murder are quite obvious in ourselves.

This is all a very dreadful discovery. It sometimes expresses itself symbolically in damning people, the commonest form of ill wish. If questioned we should deny that we meant it, and offer as proof the fact that we did not believe in damnation; but it may well be

that our unconscious mind still believes in it; and if so, it means that we wish for people inescapable suffering, without the possibility of repentance. But it is objected that a mere wish is surely not so bad as carrying the thing out. Are we sure that it has no influence? It would be difficult to prove that with our modern belief in telepathy and suggestion. It is pointed out that soldiers do not cherish hate towards those they are fighting against. That is perfectly true, because they discharge their feeling, whereas those who do not fight have no such satisfaction.

The mere repression of evil feelings, that is the refusal to admit that we have them, may have very curious results. We come to hate some person who has done us no wrong, in the place of the person who has. There was a distinguished theologian who had always detested the Germans for their theories, which he thought undermined the Christian faith. He learned German, read everything on the subject, and subjected these theories to an unsparing attack. When the war broke out he enlisted so that he might help to kill this thing. He was sent to Gallipoli, and died fighting against the Turks! This transference of hate is not only possible in international conflicts, where it may be argued that it is inescapable that the innocent should suffer for the guilty, but it manifests itself in strange perversions of love. It is a common thing to find intense hatred of parents among modern children, and it will often be found to have no rational basis whatever; it is due to some quite accidental circumstance. Sometimes a person will alternately love and hate some one very near to him and yet be unable to give the

slightest reason for the hatred; and this almost certainly means that hatred, unable to find an outlet, discharges itself on the first object it meets.

(b) Hatred is an emotion clamouring for expression.

It often has nothing really ethical in it. It is not denied that we ought to reprobate all evil, and that sometimes it is very difficult to see how you can love the sinner and hate the sin when they are so welded together; but very frequently it is obvious that it is not the sin that we hate, but the sinner, because we do not really desire the sinner's repentance. It is no uncommon thing to detect an attitude in political, national, or religious resentment, where it is perfectly clear that the last thing the person who is criticizing would like is that the object of his animosity should change. It was the idea that the Germans were incapable of repentance that most people insisted upon so desperately; they would have been sorrier than Jonah if they had shown any signs of it. All this shows that it is not ethical passion, but the relief of wounded feelings that we are seeking when we give way to hate.

We have therefore to decide what this feeling is. It is very difficult. Some trace it back to more fundamental things, to disappointed sex, to the lust for domination which cannot brook contradiction, but which tries to find an apology for its existence by getting some ethical justification. It is quite likely that it is revenge for unacknowledged sins in ourselves, for it will be noticed that people are often most down upon the sins in others which they themselves are addicted

to. Some would suggest that it is nothing but a discharge of psychic energy, in itself neutral, which, because it does not get worked off by plenty of exercise, or companionship, or self-expression, takes this form of sullen hate. That is to say it is not something evil in itself, but it is capable of becoming good. This is partly supported by the fact that the only reason why some people do not hate is because they do not love either; they are too phlegmatic and do not care.

But the religious account is probably nearer the truth, and is the only one that sanctions hope for the permanent sublimation of hate; and it is that the original psychic energy in us all is love, and God's love at that. We have perverted this by withdrawing love from God and from our neighbour because of the sacrifices it demanded, and in trying to love ourselves instead. That love is bound to turn to hate before long, because we have changed its direction and turned it on to an unworthy object. This may seem a gloomy doctrine, but it is really hopeful; for it carries this corollary, not only that this energy could be discharged as love, but that there will be no satisfaction until it is; for that is its original nature.

THE SERIOUSNESS OF THIS CONDITION OF HATE

1. It is tantamount to murder.

(a) That is a very strong statement.

It is not mere picturesque hyperbole. It is supported in principle by what our Lord Himself taught in the Sermon on the Mount, where, recalling that the ancient command was not to kill, He exhorted us never

to give way to anger because this was sufficient to bring us in danger of the eternal fire. But we must find the justification of that statement in psychology, and we must clear away all objection to it. It would be argued that surely it is not so bad to wish a man ill as actually to carry it out; that it is possible to hate people in only a slight way without wishing to carry it so far as murder. But murder is the only real satisfaction of the feeling; that is what has to be recognized.

We can see this actually working out in history. It is very incomprehensible to some how it is that most gentle-mannered and meek-minded people can be so bloody-minded in time of war; but there is nothing really inexplicable in that, if it is an outburst of all the accumulated hate that has been cherished but never expressed. There is no feeling we have within which can be dissipated until it has found expression in one form or another; and there is little doubt that these periodic outbreaks of blood mania are due to long-repressed hates. We see the most awful example of the real effect of hate in the murder of the world's Redeemer. That was not an accidental end; it was inevitable that in a world like ours Christ should be put to death, because Christ presents a satisfying object to our hate, because He is Love struggling with its deadly perversion. There has never been a single hateful thought we have had which has not gone to swell the reservoir which must one day break down its banks and sweep all before it; and this hate never finds its satisfaction until it nails Christ in derision to the cross.

(b) It is not only homicide; it is suicide.

People little know how bad hate is for their bodies. Those who are accustomed to analyse their feelings will know how under the influence of hate the physical organs are disturbed, how they burn with a hot pain which can last for a long time. Few people know what a bad effect hate has on the heart or the digestion; many of our physical ills may be due ultimately, not only to mental, but to moral states.

But it has a worse effect in the darkening of the soul. When a man hates we know how blindly he will act, how no consequences are considered, how his reason is withdrawn, how he can see nothing but his black feelings. But the man who allows himself to hate has put out the light within him; all understanding of himself and of the world is hidden from him; he does not perceive the way in which he is walking or the inevitable end of his course.

He has not eternal life in him; that is, he destroys in himself the very principle of existence, which is the love of God. If hell is anything it is the land of hate, where hate is at last confined from any possibility of doing any one any further injury, and therefore where the feeling can never be satisfied, and so becomes a roaring furnace of implacable hostility, with nothing on which to feed: a condition which by all psychology is perfectly natural, entirely inevitable, and only too conceivable.

2. This disease demands a drastic cure.

(a) Because of its nature.

Think of what it is doing for the world! The expenditure of hate upon any human being is bound to

beget a reaction; the expenditure of hate upon any corporate body of men is almost certain to get a return in compound interest. Every conquest leaves behind the seeds of rebellion, and the rebellion will go farther than the evil of the conquest. Political assassinations inflict punishment upon people beyond their desert, and then wholesale reprisals are adopted as a policy, to which there are intensified replies, and so the system mounts to madness. On the world scale it has a more awful significance. The continent of Europe has more hate concentrated to the square mile than ever before. We may be certain that the material for a still more awful revenge is preparing, not only in facts of bad distribution of nationalities and states, in the confiscations of wealth, but in the temper which is being everywhere manufactured. Revenge will, however, only bring another in its place. Wars do not get worse only because of the numbers involved and the terrible nature of the destructive weapons, but because hatred grows by compound interest, until something arises which can turn it back to its original form of love.

(b) But it is provided in the love of God.

The Cross is the cure of Hate, because it allows the hate of man to mount up against itself and refuses to return hate again, but loves instead. When we really see in a moment of faith what the Cross means we see that it is this that our hate has done. No ill thing we have ever wished or done has ceased to work out its evil until it has spent itself upon the heart of Christ. There the hate of man has been able to gather itself together and perpetrate the worst deed imaginable:

slay the innocent Lamb of God. And God was willing for this, because He knew that nothing else would ever cure man's hate; there was no hope unless it could find a perfect expression which then would have exhausted itself; and it must be secured that this dreadful act should generate no returning hate, but be swallowed up in love. At that the soul of man awakes to itself; the sting of hate is drawn, and there is now room for the inpouring of love.

Now can come repentance, as there so often does when hate has done its worst. If some of us could be allowed to see our evil wishes realized, we should never wish any one evil again; it is because we so rarely see that, that we do not see the real meaning of our evil desires, and therefore miss the incentive to repentance. But in this deed, the sum of all ill deeds done in the world, and their logical consequence, the attempted murder of God, we get every inducement to repent, because we are faced not only with the awful stillness of the death we have compassed, but the eyes open to look upon us again with even greater love. Then come cleansing tears of sorrow, the breaking of every evil desire, for it has not succeeded and it never can succeed; we have done our worst and it has utterly failed. Then we see how futile all hate is; it is not only revealed for what it is, but it is shown to be useless. And when we find we are still loved by the One we tried to destroy, we are utterly humbled; our pride which turned love to hate is for ever broken, and love comes to life within us: love to Him who first loved us; love to all men for His sake.

XII

THE FINALITY OF CHRIST

“Art Thou he that cometh, or look we for another?”—
ST. MATTHEW xi. 2.

There has always been something of a mystery about the mission of enquiry which John the Baptist sent to Christ. It is remarkable, after being among the first to recognize Jesus as the Christ, that he should have come to entertain doubts whether after all He was anything more than a forerunner like himself. Some have seen in the emergence of these doubts nothing but the outcome of depression consequent upon his imprisonment; but that is surely too slight an explanation for such a character as that of the Baptist's. The suggestion has been put forward by radical critics that the works which Jesus enumerated in His reply may have been entirely spiritual, and therefore not impressive to an observer expecting great things; and they support this hypothesis by the consideration that at the very end of the list comes the preaching of the gospel to the poor, which after the healing of lepers and the raising of the dead would be in the nature of an anti-climax if these had been actual physical miracles. But it may well be that Jesus did perform these cures and yet valued the preaching of the gospel to the poor as much more wonderful and important. How then are we to explain the Baptist's doubts, presuming that he

already knew these things were taking place? We are driven to suppose that John was expecting something from Christ more in line with his own prediction of the Coming One's career for whom he outlined a mighty mission of national repentance inaugurated by a process of fiery judgment and purgation. Beside that expectation, the way in which Jesus was interpreting His mission seemed to be a falling short; He was spending His strength on a lot of sick and demented folk, and instead of arraigning the rulers and delivering His message to the authorities, He was preaching to the "poor," the people who did not count in national affairs. Jesus refers John to the prophetic predictions of His career and shows that He is following this out in every detail; and He adds a blessing for those who find nothing in His method to offend them.

A similar question is being raised by our own age. Christianity has failed to turn nations to repentance or to guide the peoples into the way of peace. It has spent its time in looking after more or less worthless individuals while the great forces of the world have been left to go their own way. And the result has been that Christianity has done nothing to save the world from the ever-increasing catastrophe of war, and seems to have no solution for the new and worse menace of industrial strife. Unless something happens to change the thoughts of men and the direction mankind is taking, it looks as if our race were doomed; it seems travelling swiftly to perdition by what was thought to be the path of progress. In a world situation in which the very existence of humanity trembles in the balance, Christianity seems to have no clear and

arresting message, neither does it seem able to exercise any compelling power over the minds of men.

It is not surprising, therefore, that many earnest thinkers are looking round for the emergence of some new religion. It looks as if the faith which could once attract the masses and impress their leaders had lost its power. Like many other systems the world has seen, it seems to have had its day and ceased to be, and we are left waiting for some common wave of thought and life to lift mankind again.

CAN WE CONTEMPLATE CHRISTIANITY AS TEMPORARY?

I. There are conceptions of Christianity which accept this estimate.

(a) To a great deal of modern thought Christianity is simply one of the great historical religions. It differs from the others neither in its nature nor in the laws which govern its rise and fall. It is a purely natural phenomenon, a synthesis of ideas which suited the needs of the western peoples, and was favoured by the conditions of thought and organization existing at the time. By the inevitable process of evolution it is bound to be superseded by some other system as thought changes and the needs of men grow wider. It cannot be expected that with the tremendous changes produced by education and industry a system which took its rise in a simpler age can suit the modern world. And it is now manifestly failing to meet the needs of the times. It is widely assumed that intellectually Christianity is an impossible faith; it rests upon views of the universe and human history which have been

discredited by science, and its dogmatic system can no longer hold the thought of the age. Its naïve and austere morality is being everywhere rebelled against by the freer and more adventurous spirits, and is regarded as no longer able to be observed; indeed it would be prejudicial to the future of the race to do so. And it has nothing of a practical remedy to suggest to a world which is falling to pieces and must now be reconstructed on different principles.

It is interesting to note that this somewhat airy dismissal of Christianity is generally undertaken with considerable ignorance of what Christianity teaches, and of what it has already accomplished in the reform of society. It accepts the disputable dogma of an inevitable progress. It overlooks the fact that many of the arts reached their zenith centuries ago; that the religions which have really influenced human thought and conduct came from the now stagnant East; so that there is nothing inconceivable in Christianity being the most perfect religion we are ever likely to see. Those who speak most confidently of the crumbling of the dogmatic system of Christianity and who are continually girding at outworn creeds would often be puzzled to name the fundamental dogmas of Christianity or to recite one of its historic creeds; while in their place they often can put nothing but vague generalities which, as a matter of fact, are simply the watered down principles which dogma affirms and the creeds support.

Moreover, the modern movements to find a new religion are of a pathetic and pitiful order. It is recognized that any new movement must have the fervour

and hope which religion alone inspires; but they fail to provide us with any worthy object or sufficient basis. It is understood that the new religion must be international, but these attempts possess simply nothing of the clearness or conviction which would set any world movement afoot. All are aware that the truth the new religion announces must be psychologically demonstrable, but they meantime cut out that which has the greatest psychological necessity, namely, something greater than the mind which is to be moved by it. These modern movements, when they are not freakish and frankly ridiculous, are eclectic or esoteric. It was not from such material that any religion was ever yet born, nor by such a message that masses will ever be moved.

(b) Others expect a reincarnation of Christ.

This type of thought at least recognizes the necessity of more than ideas to set a religion going; they must be enunciated and embodied in a great personality and a heroic life; and this expectation seeks to exploit the magic there is in the very name of Christ. But by "Christ" is meant something quite different from what the name means in the Christian religion. By "Christ" they mean not Jesus, but a spirit, who is not divine, though of a higher than human rank, who for the redemption of this world has undertaken a succession of incarnations in history. The idea, therefore, rests first of all upon the highly doubtful theory of reincarnation, a doctrine which seems to have blighted the eastern world, and one which called forth one of the greatest religions, Buddhism, solely as a means of escaping from it. And when it attempts to identify

the persons who are to be recognized as the successive incarnations of "Christ," the list reveals the utter confusion involved in the idea. In such a succession there is not only no sure revelation of God, for their characters are too different, and sometimes doubtful or unworthy to serve any such purpose, but there can be no reliance on any system of truth built of such material, since they teach contradictory principles and methods. Indeed, the list is only made the more impossible by the condescending inclusion in it of Jesus Himself; for as a Person who has had many previous incarnations Jesus evidently is totally ignorant about Himself, His past and His future. He is the one Person who can never be fitted into such a system without, by comparison of character, making the others seem unworthy to be there at all, or, in the matter of truth, without condemning most of what He Himself said as sheer arrogance and egotism.

(c) The expectation which approximates most closely to anything that can be identified as Christian is that which looks for Christianity itself to produce something as its lineal successor, much as Judaism produced Christianity. It is not in itself inconceivable that the New Testament should have a fulfilment in the same way as the New Testament fulfilled the Old. It could never have been really gathered from the obscure and diverse prophecies of the Old Testament just what the new covenant and the expected Messiah would be like; only when they came can we look back and see that they are the fulfilment. The New Testament is full of prophecies of Christ's return, but these are too obscure and varied for us to forecast even what

is meant by them; but nevertheless His coming again may be a perfect fulfilment of all the prophecies when these are looked at in the light of their fulfilment. But that is definitely the return of Christ in glory, although readily identifiable as the historic Jesus as well as the Eternal Son of God.

It has been suggested that we really know very little about the Holy Spirit; and that there is room here for a still greater revelation: just as the dispensation of the Father succeeded to that of the Son, so the dispensation of the Son will succeed to that of the Spirit. It is unfortunate that this theory should already have had exponents like Montanus in the second century and the Abbot Joachim in the twelfth; for their respective courses are not such as to invite further advance along that line. Moreover, it may be that we can never know more of the Spirit as a Person than we know now, for it is His mission to do nothing but point to Christ; just as we know nothing of the Personality of the Father save through the Son. And it is involved in the doctrine of the Trinity that this should be so; difference in personality does not mean difference in character or purpose: He who knows the Son knows the Father, and knows the Spirit also.

Indeed, there is room for learning more of the Spirit's illumination and power, but it may well be that the realm for that progress is in the fellowship of the Church: the Spirit has His incarnation in the Church, which is the Body of Christ; and apart from unity of faith and loving fellowship, His power and glory cannot be fully revealed. In these days the hope of a more spiritual Christianity is unfortunately often taken

to involve an abandonment of historic Christianity with its creed and worship, on the plea that it is the spirit of Christianity we need, not intellectual agreement or outward expression. But this is to use the term Spirit in a sense of which the New Testament knows nothing, and to make a false opposition between the One Spirit and the One Faith and One Body which are the marks of His presence and creative power.

2. All such expectations rest on an unexamined basis.

(a) That Christianity has failed.

The declaration that Christianity has failed is not sufficiently met by the brilliant retort that it has never been tried. For at present there is no agreement as to what trying Christianity would involve to-day. And behind this widely-spread, if somewhat superficial belief that Christianity has failed there waits a stronger position to which men soon retreat, namely, that Christianity is an impossible religion. In face of such a wide divergence of opinion as Catholic and Protestant within the one religion, which effectually keeps Christianity at war within itself instead of at war with the world; in face of the amazing opposition of opinion between Christians as to whether Christianity condemns war or capitalistic industrialism, or whether it is indifferent to them or even sanctions them; or whether Christianity preaches the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth or its postponement to another life, it is possible to maintain that Christianity is fatally ambiguous and, therefore, gives us no guide for earthly conduct at all. If we take a metaphorical view of much of Christ's teaching, it would leave the

world much the same, only it would give us a different attitude towards it; while it has been declared that if Christ's teaching were taken literally it would bring the world to an end by international catastrophe, racial suicide or industrial starvation. Others hold that Christianity expects the impossible; it demands more than human nature can attain.

Over against this there has to be put the conviction that Christianity has not failed in any way that was not hypothetically anticipated. It has certainly failed to win the world, but so much the worse for the world; and the result of its rejection by the world is only proving Christianity true, even if proving it too late. Christianity is not a compulsory method; if men will not have it, then it will not have them; there is no unexpected issue. There are some who hold dogmatically that it will always fail to win the world as a whole; it will only save some individuals from utter spiritual ruin. It is curious that Plymouth Brethren and Roman Catholics seem to hold much the same opinion as to the destiny of Christianity, and it would be hasty to dismiss their outlook as unthinkable or without sanction in the New Testament. But it is possible to hold that the Kingdom of God was intended to come in this world; but if it does not, that does not decide the truth of Christianity or the practicability of its principles. There are other worlds, and God has not yet spoken His last word. Before we can agree that Christianity has failed we have got to agree as to what it was expected to do.

(b) Many of these ideas involve the falsity of Christianity. They may sometimes take the milder

and widely accepted form that there is nothing wrong with Christianity; it is the Church that has failed, in that it has been corrupted, has taken a wrong development, and has betrayed the faith which founded it. Before we could admit this we should want to know just where it is held that the Church has gone wrong, because the apprehensions, warnings and prayers of the New Testament seem to allow for a certain measure of failure. But if it is once admitted that the Church has gone so far wrong as to have utterly mistaken its Master, and become so corrupt that He has forsaken it, then this carries far-reaching consequences which are rarely considered. If Christ has been unable to preserve His Church from fundamental error or final apostasy, what hope is there for any other organization of men? The human problem is plainly insoluble. And this idea often leads on to the conception that the apostolic interpretation of Christ was wrong. It is not the historic Church only that has confused things; the confusion started within the New Testament, and with St. Paul in particular, whose ideas of a pre-existent Messiah and the redemptive purpose of His death threw Christianity on a false track. But when we get that far we are certainly involved in the belief that Christ Himself was wrong. He accepted Messiahship in some form, and that carries with it great historic and doctrinal entanglements. If He had meant to propagate an entirely inward religion, He made a great mistake in allowing anointings, organizing processions, and attempting to purge the Temple; in admitting a rite like baptism and arranging another like the Last Supper, and speaking of it in a way that invited mis-

understanding; and in selecting an inner circle of apostles and constituting them His plenipotentiaries. No reduction of His words by any method of criticism can eliminate the fact that, even if He was not what the Church has held Him to be, He still had a most exaggerated notion of the uniqueness of His own personality and the part He meant to play in the history of the world and the destiny of souls.

(c) There are those who will accept all this, who indeed make it the starting-point of their search for a new religion. But have they thought out where it leads them? The admittedly highest religion has gone hopelessly wrong; and the unquestionably greatest Personality in history has betrayed His own mission and confused His cause. Is it any use attempting anything further along this line? If the Christian religion is wrong, other religions must be even more so, and what truth can be recovered from their general untruth, or who is to be reckoned capable of making the selection? There can be no higher claim made for any religion or by any person than Christianity has made; there can be no possible repetition of a claim that has been previously discredited. And to lower the claim and simply invite men to sift out a few grains of doubtful truth from the rubbish heaps of human speculation, or, while rejecting the past, yet hope for something true to be found in the future, is to hope from humanity what it obviously cannot produce. Nor, religion having been proved wrong, can we fall back upon reason or science. If nine-tenths of the thought of mankind has been a delusion, and its supreme source of inspiration false, it is little use

building on the rest. With the failure of Christianity goes inevitably the discrediting of Christ, the rejection of all religion, the assurance of attainable truth, and the failure of hope for mankind.

WE MUST RECONSIDER THE CLAIM TO FINALITY

I. We must distinguish some things, however, it does not involve.

It does not mean that the Christian revelation is exhausted. Christ is final; no one who has ever understood what is meant by the Incarnation can conceive of it ever being repeated in an individual: that would involve confusion in personality and end all assurance of a real revelation of God through such means. But the *meaning* of Christ is inexhaustible. It is a pity if faithless fears for orthodoxy have given the impression that one must not think any further about Christian Theology. The most rigid of all Churches holds that, although nothing decided upon as dogmatically true must be contradicted, there is nothing to hinder but everything to demand a continuous dogmatic development, the future building always on the foundations of the past, but building to the very skies. Dogma may not be denied, but it can be elucidated and explained. All natural growth is open to the future, and it is illimitable. There are vast realms of thought to be explored with the great principles of Christianity as our guide. We want more thought, and it is only the superficiality of our times, both in Church and world, which is afraid of it or feels there is no more to be done.

There is a new incarnation of Christ in the building up of His body the Church, and the confines of that are as wide as the human race. It is in the fellowship of the Church that we are to explore what is meant by the communion of the Holy Ghost. Indeed, the whole experimental side of Christianity has as yet only been touched. The intense personal realization of Christ on which evangelical preaching is based, is, as a matter of fact, comparatively modern, at least in so far as is it proclaimed as an experience open to all. The mystical exploration of prayer is as yet only in its infancy, despite the immense but almost unknown work that has been already done by the saints.

The question of the social application of Christianity is only a few decades old. The recent war has raised a new issue for Christianity which means not inventing, so much as recovering, its international character, and we have yet to discover how it is to be realized and how nationality can be developed, and yet made subservient to a higher loyalty in the Kingdom of God. The industrial problem is opening our eyes to discover that instead of the Gospels being without guidance on matters economic, they are crowded with economic principles. The idea that Christianity is indifferent to the social system in which it lives arises from a confusion between the social system it is able to endure and the social system it is able to sanction.

2. Christianity is final because there is nothing final about it.

Its main ethical contribution is in the replacing of law by principle, and that principle not the denying or the defying of law, but going beyond what is com-

manded, beyond justice to mercy and love; surprising men by exceeding what is expected, breaking down tyrannies by untiring submission. In its ascetical life it is not content with perfection: it advocates holiness, that is the infinite and inexhaustible goodness of God.

The dogmatic fixation on the fundamentals, which it would be difficult to go back upon without surrendering all fixed points in Christianity, may prove to be no hindrance, but only a hindrance to our tying ourselves into hopeless knots, losing our way, getting into an impasse. The great dogmas of the Church are not shackles, but axioms of freedom; they are not doors into a prison, but ways of escape into liberty; they are like buoys which mark the channel to the open sea.

Even if Christianity were to fail on this planet, there may be an infinity of resources in the love that planned the Incarnation and endured Calvary; we only need to know that God was personally revealed and involved in Christ, and then Christ is able to hold endless hope for man.

3. The re-discoveries of our own times are promising.

It was left to the nineteenth century to re-discover the historic Jesus in such a fashion that He stands before our own age more vividly than in any age save that in which He lived. When this discovery of the familiar, human, loving figure is identified with the great declarations of the Creeds, then there will be inaugurated that revolution in our conception of God which is one of the greatest needs of our age. We have been thinking of God as if Jesus Christ were no revelation of Him at all. To hold with intellectual

and moral conviction that Jesus of Nazareth had precisely the same character as the Eternal Father is a belief not easy to come at; and we have not yet understood all it implies. If it is true, then we have to unlearn a great deal, and many things that have passed for truth must be rejected as lies.

We are daily discovering the possibilities locked up both within matter and the human mind, which, if they could be geared on to saintly character and the pursuit of social justice, would result in vast changes in the nature of man and the significance of earthly life.

There is a gradual drawing together of conservative religion and revolutionary thought. If these things should ever coalesce, as in principle they ought, it would unite forces that have been hitherto opposed and would make an enormous difference both to religion and to social reform. Once again the Gospel call would gain point and touch the imagination of men, the ranks of social reformers would be recruited from those who believed, while those who believed most firmly would labour to lay the foundations of a true social order. Everything indicates that we are at the beginning of Christianity, not at the end. Our Lord is the Alpha and the Omega, and we have as yet hardly learned the alphabet of the Gospel. Christ may exhaust this world: this world will never exhaust Him.

THE END

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